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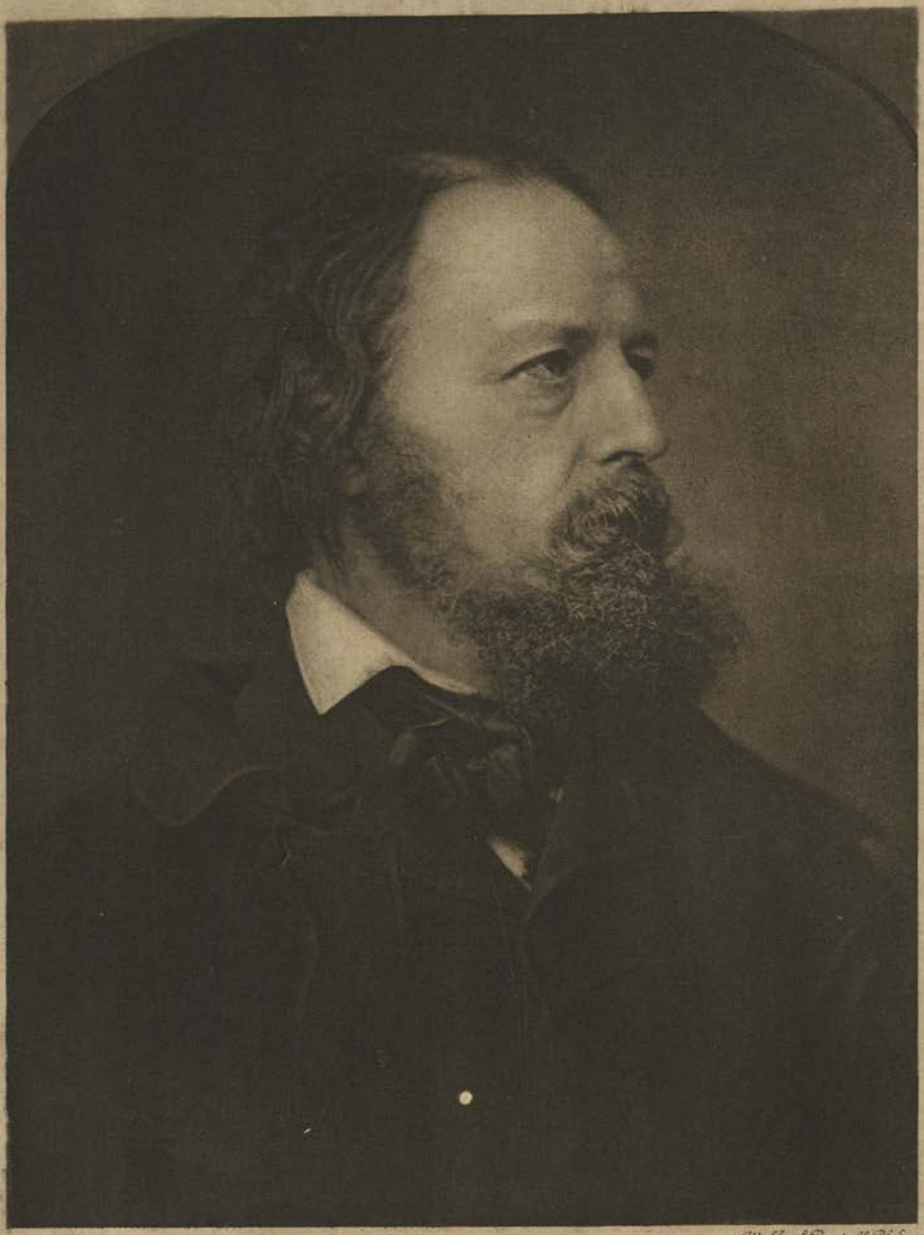
# TENNYSON



Walker & Boutall Ph. Sc.

*Alfred Tennyson.*

*from the photograph by John Mayall.*

# FRED LORD TENNYSON

## A MEMOIR

BY HIS SON

I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within Himself make pure!

VOLUME II

London
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# CHAPTER I.

## THE "ENOCH ARDEN" VOLUME, WITH NOTES BY MY FATHER.

Spedding, the calm philosopher, glowed with delight, and said "Enoch Arden" was the finest story he had ever heard[1], and was more especially adapted for Alfred than for any other poet.

*Letter from Thomas Woolner to Mrs Tennyson.*

### 1864.

My father was always an enthusiast for Italian freedom. Hence the great event of the year at Farringford was Garibaldi's visit. My mother wrote in April:

We went to the Seelys of Brooke to pay our respects to Garibaldi. A most striking figure in his picturesque white poncho lined with red, his embroidered red shirt and coloured tie over it. His face very noble, powerful, and sweet, his forehead high and square. Altogether he looked one of the great men of our Elizabethan age. His manner was simple and kind.

A. and I went out to fix a spot in our garden where the Wellingtonia should be planted by him (given to A. by the Duchess of Sutherland, and raised by her from a cone that had been shot from a tree three hundred feet high in California). Poor Philip Worsley's[2] poems had just arrived—the thought of

[1] Adelaide Procter wrote a poem on a similar subject, but this my father did not know until after "Enoch Arden" had been published.

[2] The author of the well-known translation of the *Odyssey*.

him, dying of consumption in the lodging near the bay, mingled strangely with the feeling of this moment and the sounds of welcome as Garibaldi passed thro' the village to Farringford. People on foot and on horseback and in carriages had waited at our gate two hours for him. Some rushed forward to shake hands with him. He stood up and bowed. A. and I and the boys were in the portico awaiting his arrival. On entering the house Garibaldi admired the primroses with which the rooms were decked, and liked the view of our park, and said to A., "I wish I had your trees in Caprera." A. and he went up to A.'s study together, and they talked on politics, A. advising the General not to talk politics in England. They repeated Italian poetry to each other.

He told A. that he "could never doubt his country—that he loved her." "*She* never alters!" he said. "Next to God I never cease to have faith in *her*." We introduced Garibaldi to Sir Henry Taylor[1] and to other friends. It was pleasant to see how his face lighted up when he recognized his old acquaintance Mrs Franklin (wife of Colonel Franklin stationed here): and he greeted the Colonel warmly too. Mrs Cameron wanted to photograph Garibaldi, and dropped down on her knees before him, and held up her black hands, covered with chemicals. He evidently thought that she was a beggar until we had explained who she was.

Then we went to plant the Wellingtonia. A. had the large screen put up to protect Garibaldi from the cold east wind. Several strangers were there, and when the tree was planted they gave a shout. On going away Garibaldi shook hands with all and kissed the boys. A. was charmed with his simplicity, but thought that in worldly matters he seemed to have the "divine stupidity of a hero." A. also saw Mazzini, and was

[1] Henry Taylor wrote of Garibaldi's visit to Farringford:

"And there was he, that gentle hero, who,
By virtue and the strength of his right arm,
Dethroned an unjust king, and then withdrew
To tend his farm.

To whom came forth a mighty man of song,
Whose deep-mouth'd music rolls thro' all the land,
Voices of many rivers, rich or strong,
Or sweet or grand."

struck with his keen intellectual face, and quoted with approval what he had said, "Nothing in this world is so contemptible as a literary coterie."

My father wrote then to the Duke of Argyll:

MY DEAR DUKE,

Did you hear Garibaldi repeat any Italian poetry? I did, for I had heard that he himself had made songs and hymns: and I asked him, "Are you a poet?" "Yes," he said quite simply, whereupon I spouted to him a bit of Manzoni's great ode, that which Gladstone translated. I don't know whether he relished it, but he began immediately to speak of Ugo Foscolo and quoted, with great fervour, a fragment of his "I Sepolcri," beginning with "Il navigante che veleggio," etc. and ending with "Delle Parche il canto," which verses he afterwards wrote out for me: and they certainly seem to be fine, whatever the rest of the poem may be. I have not yet read it but mean to do so, for he sent me Foscolo's *Poesie* from London; and in return I sent him the "Idylls of the King," which I do not suppose he will care for. What a noble human being! I expected to see a hero and I was not disappointed. One cannot exactly say of him what Chaucer says of the ideal knight, "As meke he was of port as is a maid"; he is more majestic than meek, and his manners have a certain divine simplicity in them, such as I have never witnessed in a native of these islands, among men at least, and they are gentler than those of most young maidens whom I know. He came here and smoked his cigar in my little room and we had a half hour's talk in English, tho' I doubt whether he understood me perfectly, and his meaning was often obscure to me. I ventured to give him a little advice: he denied that he came with any political purpose to England, merely to thank the English for their kindness to him, and the interest they

had taken in himself and all Italian matters, and also to consult Ferguson about his leg. Stretching this out he said, "There's a campaign in me yet." When I asked if he returned thro' France he said he would never set foot on the soil of France again. I happened to make use of this expression, "That fatal debt of gratitude owed by Italy to Napoleon." "Gratitude," he said; "Hasn't he had his pay? his reward? If Napoleon were dead I should be glad, and if I were dead he would be glad." These are slight chroniclings, but I thought you would like to have them. He seemed especially taken with my two little boys.

As to "sea-blue birds" &c. defendant states that he was walking one day in March by a deep-banked brook, and under the leafless bushes he saw the kingfisher flitting or fleeting underneath him, and there came into his head a fragment of an old Greek lyric poet, "ἁλιπόρφυρος εἴαρος ὄρνις," "The sea-purple or sea-shining bird of Spring," spoken of as the halcyon. Defendant cannot say whether the Greek halcyon be the same as the British kingfisher, but as he never saw the kingfisher on this particular brook before March, he concludes that in that country at least, they go down to the sea during the hard weather and come up again with the Spring, for what says old Belon:

"Le Martinet-pescheur fait sa demeure
En temps d'hiver au bord de l'océan,
Et en esté sur la rivière en estan,
Et de poisson se repaist à toute heure."

You see he puts "esté," which I suppose stands for all the warmer weather. Was not the last letter in *The Field* written by yourself?

Ever, my dear Duke, with all kind things from myself and wife to the Duchess,

Yours, A. TENNYSON.

We are sorry not to have seen you at Farringford in the time of flowers; let us know when you can come. I hope the Queen is well and able to enjoy this fine weather.

Just before the publication of "Enoch Arden" we made a pilgrimage into Brittany, where we unearthed many wild "Enoch Arden" stories and ballads. The Breton sailors are fine, simple, religious fellows, many of whom join the Iceland fishery and the French navy. My mother wrote:

There are many pleasant things in our pleasant journey to think of, not the least those weird stones[1]. Carnac owes much less to them than we expected: the Morbihan district interested us much more. Mont St Michel, the old churches, and the Bayeux tapestry, to say nothing of our drives about the country, were very interesting too. From Quimper to Morlaix is wild Wales in miniature. We did not see as much as we ought to have done of the Western and Northern coasts. We drove by a road near the coast, not on the coast, having foolishly omitted to get a good map in Paris, and not having been able to find one afterwards. The people we found very uncommunicative, and, as far as we could discover, totally ignorant of the past history of their country, and of the Arthur legends. We went to Lannion on purpose to see Keldthuen (where Arthur is said to have held his court) and Avalon: but Keldthuen we found a moated and not ancient chateau, and tho' our driver showed us Avalon, the sailors declared it was not Avalon.

Nevertheless the hostess of the Hôtel de l'Europe at Lannion somehow discovered who my father was, and proclaimed everywhere that he was the poet of "notre grand roi Arthur."

The joy of my father in heroism, whether of a past age or of the present, and his delight in celebrating it, are more than ever apparent throughout this volume of

[1] The dolmens and cromlechs.

1864. He was especially happy when writing of his "Old Fisherman." In these "Idylls of the Hearth[1]" he had worked at the same vein which he opened in his 1842 poems.—Here he writes with as intimate a knowledge, but with greater power, on subjects from English life, the sailor, the farmer, the parson, the city lawyer, the squire, the country maiden, and the old woman who dreams of her past life in a restful old age.

He said that, excepting the poems suggested by the simple, old-world classical subjects, he had mostly drawn his scenes in England, because he could not truly pourtray the atmosphere of foreign lands. He added that he thought *Romola* a mistake; because George Eliot had not been able to enter into the complex Italian life and character, however much she might have studied them in books.

Sixty thousand copies of "Enoch Arden" were sold in a very short time, and after this he was not infrequently called "The Poet of the People," a title which could not but be appreciated by one who wrote:

> Plowmen, shepherds have I found, and more than once, and still could find,
> Sons of God and kings of men in utter nobleness of mind.

Indeed, judging by the countless letters from all conditions of men all over the world, and from the many translations into foreign languages, this volume—which contained, besides "Enoch Arden," "Aylmer's Field," "The Grandmother," "Sea Dreams," "The Northern Farmer," "Tithonus," "The Sailor Boy," "The Flower," the "Welcome to Alexandra" and the "Dedication"—is, perhaps with the exception of "In Memoriam," the most popular of his works.

[1] The first title in the proof-sheets of the "Enoch Arden" volume.

SUMMER HOUSE IN WHICH "ENOCH ARDEN" WAS WRITTEN

*From a Drawing by W. Biscombe Gardner*

"I can always write when I see my subject whole," he said; but he was fastidious in his choice of subjects, which were selected according to his mood. It took him only about a fortnight to write "Enoch Arden," within a little summer-house in the meadow called Maiden's Croft, looking over Freshwater Bay and toward the downs. In this meadow he paced up and down, making his lines; and then wrote them in his MS book on the table of the summer-house, which he himself had designed and painted.

He loved the sea as much as any sailor, and knew all its moods whether on the shore or in mid-ocean. He loved it for its own sake and also because English heroism has ever been conspicuous on ship-board: he felt in himself the spirit of the old Norsemen. This delight in the sea more especially comes out in such poems as "Enoch Arden," "Ulysses," "The Revenge," "The Voyage," "The Sailor Boy," "Sea Dreams," "Maud," "Break, break," and "Crossing the Bar," and I remember well his glory in having made these lines in "Boadicea"—

Fear not, isle of blowing woodland, isle of silvery parapets!
Thine the liberty, thine the glory, thine the deeds to be celebrated,
Thine the myriad-rolling ocean, light and shadow illimitable;

and,

Roar'd as when the roaring breakers boom and blanch on the precipices.

His MS notes written for me on "Enoch Arden" are as follows: "'Enoch Arden' (like 'Aylmer's Field') is founded on a theme given me by the sculptor Woolner. I believe that this particular story came out of Suffolk, but something like the same story is told in Brittany and elsewhere."

Englishmen living in the tropics often assured him that, in his description of the isle, the splendours of those regions were faithfully depicted; also the sense of weariness which weighs upon an Englishman doomed to live long among them. On the lines which follow—

> Once likewise, in the ringing of his ears,
> Tho' faintly, merrily—far and far away—
> He heard the pealing of his parish bells,

he wrote: "Mr Kinglake told me that he had heard his own parish bells in the desert on a Sunday morning when they would have been ringing at home: and added, 'I might have had a singing in my ears, and the imaginative memory did the rest.'"

About the line

> There came so loud a calling of the sea,

he observed: "The calling of the sea is a term used, I believe, chiefly in the Western parts of England, to signify a ground swell. When this occurs on a windless night, the echo of it rings thro' the timbers of the old houses in a haven."

His similes in "Enoch Arden," he said, were all such as might have been used by simple fisher-folk, quoting this as one of the tenderest (he thought) he had written:

> She heard,
> Heard, and not heard him; as the village girl,
> Who sets her pitcher underneath the spring,
> Musing on him that used to fill it for her,
> Hears and not hears, and lets it overflow.

Among many stories as to the effect of "Enoch Arden" on the uneducated, I will quote one.

A district visitor was distributing tracts among a large meeting of some poor folk to whom she had

lately read part of "Enoch Arden." "Thank you, ma'am," one old lady said, "but I'd give all I had for that other beautiful tract which you read t'other day (a sentiment which was echoed by the others), it did me a power of good." This pleased him; he "was glad to have done any good to anyone."

The opening lines of "Aylmer's Field" unfold the moral of that poem. The sequel describes the Nemesis which fell upon Sir Aylmer Aylmer in his pride of wealth. My father always felt a prophet's righteous wrath against this form of selfishness; and no one can read his terrible denunciations of such pride trampling on a holy human love, without being aware that the poet's heart burnt within him while at work on this tale of wrong.

He notes that "Tithonus" had been begun years ago, at the same date that "Ulysses" was written, and that Professor Jebb's translation of the poem into Latin hexameters was a work of real genius.

About the "Northern Farmers," old and new style, my father writes: "Roden Noel calls these two poems 'photographs,' but they are imaginative. The first is founded on the dying words of a farm-bailiff, as reported to me by a great uncle of mine when verging upon 80,—'God A'mighty little knows what He's about, a-taking me. An' Squire will be so mad an' all.' I conjectured the man from that one saying."

"The 'Farmer, new style' (in 'The Holy Grail' volume), is likewise founded on a single sentence, 'When I canters my 'erse along the ramper (highway) I 'ears proputty, proputty, proputty.' I had been told that a rich farmer in our neighbourhood was in the habit of saying this. I never saw the man and know no more of him. It was also reported of the wife of this worthy that, when she entered the *salle à manger* of a sea bathing-place, she slapt her pockets and said, 'When I married I brought him £5000 on each shoulder.'"

My father was fond of telling stories of this kind in Lincolnshire dialect. The three following are examples:

A housemaid, who was born in the fen country, and accustomed to drink the strong fen water, went to Caistor on the Wolds, famous for its splendid springs. However, she soon gave warning for this reason—"She liked Caistor, but could not abear the watter, for that taästed o' nowt [nothing]." Another story was of a Lincolnshire farmer coming home on Sunday after a sermon about the endless fires of hell and talking to his wife—"Noä, Sally, it woän't do, noä constitootion cud stan' it." A third was of a Lincolnshire minister praying for rain: "O God, send us rain, and especially on John Stubbs' field in the middle marsh, and if Thou doest not know it, it has a big thorn-tree in the middle of it."

The Lincolnshire dialect poems are so true in dialect and feeling, that when they were first read in that county a farmer's daughter exclaimed: "That's Lincoln labourers' talk, and I thought Mr Tennyson was a gentleman."

"The Flower[1]," one of the shorter poems in this volume, is described in the manuscript notes as "an universal apologue." On the subject he quoted: "In

[1] *To J. B. Selkirk.*

FRESHWATER, I. W.

DEAR SIR,

Accept my best thanks for your volume of Essays, one of which I had read before, in the *Cornhill* I think. The world, and especially the schools of our younger poets, would be none the worse for lending you an attentive ear. I may remark that you have fallen into a not uncommon error with respect to my little fable "The Flower," as if "I" in the poem meant A. T. and "the flower" my own verses. And so you have narrowed into personality an universal apologue and parable. I once had a letter from a stranger asking whether Christianity were not intended by it. You see by this that I have more than dipt into your book.

Pray believe me yours in all sincerity,

A. TENNYSON.

this world there are few voices and many echoes." A friend writes:

However absorbed Tennyson might be in earnest talk, his eye and ear were always alive to the natural objects around him. I have often known him stop short in a sentence to listen to a blackbird's song, to watch the sunlight glint on a butterfly's wing, or to examine a field flower at his feet. The lines on "The Flower" were the result of an investigation of the "love-in-idleness" growing at Farringford—he made them nearly all on the spot and said them to me (as they are) next day. Trees and plants had a special attraction for him and he longed to the last to see the vegetation of the Tropics[1].

Among the experiments in classical quantity[2], the Alcaic "Ode to Milton" was annotated thus: "My Alcaics are not intended for Horatian Alcaics, nor are Horace's Alcaics the Greek Alcaics, nor are his Sapphics, which are vastly inferior to Sappho's, the Greek Sapphics. The Horatian Alcaic is perhaps the stateliest metre in the world except the Virgilian hexameter at its best; but the Greek Alcaic, if we may judge from the two or three specimens left, had a much freer and lighter movement: and I have no doubt that an old Greek if he knew our language would admit my Alcaics as legitimate, only Milton must not be pronounced Mil*ton*."

His hexameters directed against the translation of Homer into accentual English hexameters are well known. German hexameters he disliked even more than English. He once said—"'Was die Neugier nicht thut': What a beginning of an hexameter!" and "What a line 'Hab' ich den Markt und die Strassen, doch nie so einsam gesehen!'"

Indeed he thought that even quantitative English

[1] Mrs Richard Ward.

[2] First published in the *Cornhill Magazine*, December, 1863.

hexameters were as a rule only fit for comic subjects[1], "tho' of course you might go on with perfect hexameters of the following kind, but they would grow monotonous:

High woods roaring above me, dark leaves falling about me."

I remember a comic end of an Alcaic in quantity, which he made at this time:

Thine early rising well repaid thee,
Munificently rewarded artist.

The well-known unquantitative couplet by Coleridge he altered into

Up springs hexameter with might, as a fountain arising,
Lightly the fountain falls, lightly the pentameter.

I have heard him say, "Englishmen *will* spoil English verses by scanning when they are reading, and they confound accent and quantity[2]."

Virgil's finest hexameters, he thought, occurred in the *Georgics*, and in that noble sixth book of the *Æneid:* for instance for descriptive beauty and fine sound he would quote:

"Fluctus ut, in medio cœpit quum albescere ponto,
Longius, ex altoque sinum trahit; utque volutus

[1] Some of the hexameters in my "Jack and the Beanstalk," and some of those in my "Bluebeard" (Mrs Thackeray Ritchie's *Bluebeard's Keys*), were made by him. Throughout these hexameters by his advice quantity, except here and there for the sake of variety, coincides with accent. "Twice," my father would say, "in the first two lines of the first *Æneid*, and elsewhere perpetually, quantity is contradicted by accent."

[2] As an illustration of a quantitative line regardless of accent he suggested the following pentameter:

All men alike hate slops, particularly gruel.

Ad terras, immane sonat per saxa, neque ipso
Monte minor procumbit: at ima exæstuat unda
Vorticibus, nigramque alte subjectat arenam";

and,

"Romanos rerum dominos gentemque togatam";

and,

"Demens qui nimbos et non imitabile fulmen
Ære et cornipedum pulsu simularat equorum."

The single Homeric hexameters that he was fondest of quoting for examples of sounding lines, were

"ἐξ ἀκαλαρρείταο βαθυῤῥόου ὠκεάνοιο,"

and

"βῆ δ' ἀκέων παρὰ θῖνα πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης."

"These are," he would say, "grander in our modern broad Northern pronunciation than in the soft Southern talk of the Greeks, with a difference as between the roar of the Northern sea and the hissing of the Mediterranean."

I need not dwell on my father's love of the perfection of classical literary art, on his sympathy with the temper of the old world[1], on his love of the old metres, and on his views as to how the classical subject ought to be treated in English poetry.

He purposely chose those classical subjects from mythology and legend, which had been before but imperfectly treated, or of which the stories were slight, so that he might have free scope for his imagination, "The Lotos-Eaters," "Ulysses," "Tithonus," "Œnone," "The Death of Œnone," "Tiresias," "Demeter and Persephone," "Lucretius." A modern feeling was to some extent introduced into the themes, but they were

[1] Shown especially in such poems as "Lucretius," "Frater ave atque vale," and "To Virgil."

dealt with according to the canons of antique art. The blank verse was often intentionally restrained[1].

About his blank verse he said something of this kind to me: "The English public think that blank verse is the easiest thing in the world to write, mere prose cut up into five-foot lines; whereas it is one of the most difficult. In a blank verse you can have from three up to eight beats[2]; but, if you vary the beats unusually, your ordinary newspaper critic sets up a howl. The varying of the beats, of the construction of the feet, of the emphasis, of the extra-metrical syllables and of the pauses, helps to make the greatness of blank verse. There are many other things besides, for instance a fine ear for vowel-sounds, and the kicking of the geese out of the boat (i.e. doing away with sibilations); but few educated men really understand the structure of blank verse. I never, if possible, put two 'ss' together in any verse of mine. My line is not, as often quoted,

And freedom broadens *s*lowly down—

but

And freedom slowly broadens down.

[1] "As a metrist, he is the creator of a new blank verse, different both from the Elizabethan and from the Miltonic. He has known how to modulate it to every theme, and to elicit a music appropriate to each; attuning it in turn to a tender and homely grace, as in 'The Gardener's Daughter'; to the severe and ideal majesty of the antique, as in 'Tithonus'; to meditative thought, as in 'The Ancient Sage,' or 'Akbar's Dream'; to pathetic or tragic tales of contemporary life, as in 'Aylmer's Field,' or 'Enoch Arden'; or to sustained romantic narrative, as in the 'Idylls.' No English poet has used blank verse with such flexible variety, or drawn from it so large a compass of tones; nor has any maintained it so equably on a high level of excellence. In lyric metres Tennyson has invented much, and has also shown a rare power of adaptation. Many of his lyric measures are wholly his own; while others have been so treated by him as to make them virtually new." *The English Poets*, edited by T. H. Ward, Preface by Professor Jebb.

[2] As an example of rapid blank verse he would give the passage in "Balin and Balan" from "He rose, descended, met" to "face to ground."

People sometimes say how 'studiedly alliterative' Tennyson's verse is. Why, when I spout my lines first, they come out so alliteratively that I have sometimes no end of trouble to get rid of the alliteration."

The note by my father, that originally headed his blank verse translation from the *Iliad* beginning

He ceased, and sea-like roar'd the Trojan host,

ran: "Some, and among these one at least of our best and greatest[1], have endeavoured to give us the *Iliad* in English hexameters, and by what appears to me their failure have gone far to prove the impossibility of the task. I have long held by our blank verse in this matter, and now after having spoken so disrespectfully here of these hexameters, I venture or rather feel bound to subjoin a specimen (however brief and with whatever demerits) of a blank verse translation."

The passages in the *Iliad* which most struck him for their beauty of poetic feeling and diction were those two which he translated into blank verse: and the parting of Paris at the end of the sixth book of the *Iliad*, which he translated *vivâ voce* to me as follows:

"Nor did Paris linger in his lofty halls, but when he had girt on his gorgeous armour, all of varied bronze, then he rushed thro' the city, glorying in his airy feet. And as when a stall-kept horse, that is barley-fed at the manger, breaketh his tether, and dasheth thro' the plain, spurning it, being wont to bathe himself in the fair-running river, rioting, and reareth his head, and his mane flieth back on either shoulder, and he glorieth in his beauty, and his knees bear him at the gallop to the haunts and meadows of the mares; so ran the son of Priam, Paris, from the height of Pergamus, all in arms,

[1] This was written after reading Sir John Herschel's "Book I. of the *Iliad* translated in the Hexameter Metre," *Cornhill Magazine*, May 1862.

glittering like the sun, laughing for light-heartedness, and his swift feet bare him."

*Letter from Robert Browning about "Enoch Arden."*

19 WARWICK CRESCENT,
*Oct. 13th*, 1864.

DEAR TENNYSON,

I have been two months away, and only just find your book now. (It ought to show "From A. T." on the fly-leaf for my son's sake hereafter.) "Enoch" continues the perfect thing I thought it at first reading; but the "Farmer," taking me unawares, astonished me more in this stage of acquaintanceship. How such a poem disproves the statement in that strange mistake of yours, the Flower-apologue! "Steal your seed?" as if they want flower-seed in a gum-flower manufactory! One might cabbage out a tolerable rose, by adroit scissor-work on starched calico, after studying in your gardens of Gul, but the seed for the phenomenon itself comes from a place that was never reached from the top of a wall, you may be sure. "Boadicea," the new metre, is admirable, a paladin's achievement in its way. I am thinking of Roland's Pass in the Pyrenees, where he hollowed a rock that had hitherto blocked the road, by one kick of his boot: so have you made our language undergo you.

Do but go on, and I won't mind adding, may I continue to see and hear you, it is reason enough for being ready to do so.

Good-bye and God bless you! Give my congratulations to Mrs Tennyson. I looked a long look three days ago at the Hôtel de Douvres where I met her first; and of you I was thinking particularly at Amiens station next afternoon when somebody clapped me on the shoulder, Grant Duff, if you know him.

Ever yours, on the various stations of this life's "line," and, I hope, in the final refreshment-room ere we get each his cab and drive gaily off "Home," where call upon

ROBERT BROWNING.

## UNPUBLISHED EPIGRAM OF THIS PERIOD.

### *Sadness.*

*Eternal illimitable darkness is brother to eternal silence.*

Immeasurable sadness!
And I know it as a poet,
And I greet it, and I meet it,
Immeasurable sadness!
And the voice that apes a nation—
Let it cry an affectation,
Or a fancy or a madness,—
But I know it as a poet,
And I meet it, and I greet it,
And I say it, and repeat it,
Immeasurable sadness!

The Queen having asked for some lines to be inscribed on the Duchess of Kent's statue in the Mausoleum at Frogmore, these were sent:

*Her children rise up and call her blessed.*

Long as the heart beats life within her breast,
Thy child will bless thee, guardian mother mild,
And far away thy memory will be bless'd
By children of the children of thy child.

# CHAPTER II.

## MY MOTHER'S JOURNAL AND MY FATHER'S LETTER-DIARIES.

[*Throughout Chapters II, III, IV and VI, for the greater clearness of the text, I have printed all extracts from my mother's journal in small print; and my father's diary and letters, as well as my own paragraphs, in large print.*]

1865–1869.

*My father's letter-diary.* (*The death of his mother.*)

1865. *Feb.* 21*st.* Rosemount, Hampstead. Mother had gone before I came, she went at 10 p.m., age 84.

I dare not see her. I shall have to stop over the funeral. She did not ask for me especially, which is one comfort.

*Feb.* 25*th.* Hampstead. I am going to put up at Arthur's. We are all I think *pretty* cheerful. I hope Woolner will make himself quite at home (at Farringford) and have an attic for smoking, for he enjoys his pipe.

Monday, Hampstead. We are going to the funeral to-day. The departure of so blessed a being, almost whose last words were, when asked how she felt, "very quiet," seems to have no sting in it and she declared that she had no pain. We all of us hate the pompous funeral we have to join in, black plumes, black coaches and

nonsense. We should like all to go in white and gold rather, but convention is against us.

(After the funeral[1].) All has gone off very quietly. A funeral came before us and a funeral followed. I could have wished for the country churchyard[2].

*My mother's journal.—The Club, "Aylmer's Field," Mesmerism, Winchester, Professor Owen.*

The following Preface was written by A. for the "Selection from his Poems" (sold in threepenny numbers), in which were included six new poems, "The Captain," "On a Mourner," "Home they brought him slain with spears," and "Three sonnets to a coquette":

"I have been assured that a selection from my poems would not be unacceptable to the people.

It is true that there are some who cry out against selections, and perhaps not unjustly when these are fragments, but I have inserted nothing here which is not whole in itself, and such as I have been led to believe would be most popular.

Therefore not without the hope that my choice may be sanctioned by their approval I dedicate this volume to the 'Working Men of England.'"

The Queen sent her thanks for the "Selection from the Poems," expressing her cordial satisfaction on hearing that this "admirable selection from your poems will thus be brought within the reach of the poorest amongst the subjects of Her Majesty."

A. wrote the following letters to the Duke of Argyll about his election to The Club (Dr Johnson's Club), and with reference to the two lines which ended "Aylmer's Field" in the first edition:

There the thin weasel with faint hunting-cry
Follows the mouse, and all is open field.

[1] A plain cross marks the grave at the entrance to Highgate cemetery.

[2] My mother writes: "All was so painless and peaceful, and she was so much like an angel, there is all the comfort that can be in her end, and in her memory."

FARRINGFORD,
*Feb.* 17*th*, 1865.

MY DEAR DUKE,

Before answering definitely, I should like to know something about expenses. "The Club"? It is either my fault or my misfortune that I have never heard of it. I suppose one has not to pay some 25 guineas entrance and some 7 ditto a year, because then, I would not say that the game is not worth the candle, but that the candle is too dear for me. Does one only pay for one's dinner when eaten, or how is it?

Ever yours not ungratefully,

A. TENNYSON.

I have ascertained that weasels *have* a hunting-cry.

FARRINGFORD,
*Feb.* 20*th*, 1865.

MY DEAR DUKE,

Propose me: I agree: yours be the shame if I'm blackballed!!!

*Weasels.*

I have not heard of any weasels crying in the chase after a *mouse*, nor where it is a *solitary* hunter of *anything*. But I am assured by those who have heard them that when they join in the chase after *great* game, such as a rabbit (even tho' there should be no more than two), they not unfrequently utter their faint hunting-cry. I suppose the size of their victim excites them.

I never see *The Field*. Would it be worth while writing thereto on this matter?

Yours ever, A. TENNYSON.

*From the Duke of Argyll.*

PRIVY SEAL OFFICE,
*March 16th*, 1865.

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

You were last night unanimously elected a member of "The Club," and you will probably receive by this post the usual formal intimation to that effect from Dean Milman, who was chairman at last night's dinner.

The form of intimation was drawn up as a joke by Gibbon and has been adhered to ever since[1]. You will be amused by its terms. The Duc d'Aumale was elected along with you. There were four vacancies and we think we have filled them up to our credit.

1. Poet Laureate. 2. Duc D'Aumale. 3. Froude. 4. Dean Stanley. You will have to send £7 (£5 entrance and £2 for the year's subscription) to the credit of the Club account with,—I forget the banker's name—but I will send it to you.

Ever yours, ARGYLL.

During the end of March and beginning of April the Alexander Grants, Annie Thackeray, Mr G. F. Watts, Mrs and Miss Marsden visited us.

About Mrs Marsden A. recalled how through his mesmerism before her marriage she had recovered her health:—"We were staying at Malvern. Dr Marsden was attending my wife and said to me, 'Instead of paying me my fee, I wish you would grant me a favour. Come and mesmerize a young lady who is very ill.' I said, 'I can't mesmerize, I never mesmerized anyone in my life.' But the doctor would take no refusal and said, 'Pooh! look at your powerful frame!' So I mesmerized her according to the doctor's instructions. The first day it took me about an hour to send her to sleep; afterwards only a few seconds. Once she had a pain over her eye, and the doctor said, 'Breathe upon her eye!' I did so, then begged her pardon, saying that I had forgotten I had been smoking. Dr Marsden said, 'She cannot hear you, that one breath has sent

[1] "I have to intimate to you that *you have had the honour of being elected* a member of 'The Club.'"

her off into the deepest of slumbers.' In a little while the lady grew better, and we moved to Cheltenham. A week or two afterwards I returned to Malvern for a few hours, but I had not thought of telling anyone that I was coming. I met Dr Marsden in the street, who at once went and told the lady. Before the doctor had said more to her than 'I have good news for you,' the lady said, 'I know what you have come to tell me, I have felt Mr Tennyson here for half an hour.'" This lady eventually married Dr Marsden.

*May 7th.* Last evening, in answer to a letter from Florence asking for lines on Dante, he made six and sent them off to-day in honour of Dante's six hundredth centenary.

He wrote to Aubrey de Vere about the death of his friend Stephen Spring Rice (father of the present Lord Monteagle) as follows:

FARRINGFORD, *May 15th*, 1865.

MY DEAR AUBREY,

The death of my good friend Stephen has not taken me in any way by surprise. I had even expected to hear of it some weeks ago. Death is, I should hope, to most of us a "deliverance," and to him especially, suffering as he did continually from these attacks, it must have been a "great" one. I have had such dear and near losses this year, that—I do not say I can on that account sympathise more fully with his wife and children, but I do most fully feel for and with them: and tell them so whenever an opportunity occurs. I hope they are all well, and you also.

Ever yours, A. TENNYSON.

P. S. He was one of the five of his friends I knew before our marriage, and the third (the other two Arthur Hallam and Henry Lushington) who has left us. No new friends can be like the old to him or to any, I suppose, and few of the old were so dear to him as

he. May I too say all that is kind and sympathising? How does his father bear his loss? It seems a long time since we met.

Ever yours, EMILY TENNYSON.

*May 22nd.* We started with the boys for their private tutor's, Mr Paul, at Bailie in Dorsetshire. We visited the Minster at Wimborne on the way. Saw the monument of Margaret Beaufort with her hand in her husband's. A sorrowful sight to us both—our two boys on the Bailie platform, alone for the first time in their lives as our train left.

*June 8th.* We went home by Winchester and slept there, and lunched with the Warburtons. He took us into the Dean's garden to see the fine view of the Cathedral, and the wonderfully clear stream. A. told a story of his driving into Winchester on the coach when a young man, and asking the coachman, "What can you tell me about Winchester?" and his answer, "Debauched, sir, like all cathedral cities." He and Mr Warburton compared notes, for A. had been reading *Job* in Hebrew, a book in which he had always rejoiced.

*June 12th.* Mrs Woolner, speaking of a party at Oxford at which A. had been expected, wrote:

Everyone was regretting Mr Tennyson's absence from the party, above the rest Bishop Colenso who had been very desirous to meet him. Indeed he said that your husband was the only man he had wished to see before leaving England, as he thought him the man who was doing more than any other to frame the Church of the future.

*July 23rd.* Farringford. Professor Owen arrived. A. went with him to Brightstone. They spread out their luncheon on Mr Foxe's lawn and looked at the great dragon (a Saurian reptile dug up at Brooke) which was new to the Professor, and which quite answered his expectations. He never saw one so sheathed in armour, and thought of calling it Euacanthus Vectianus. Most interesting he was. The story of his medical student days, of the negro's head which he had been carrying

slipping from under his arm, bounding down the hill and bursting through a window into the midst of a quiet family at tea: their horror; his rushing in after the head without a word, and clutching at it and "bolting," was very ghastly.

*Tour to Waterloo, Weimar and Dresden.*

*Aug.* 12*th.* Drove through the forest of Soigny to Waterloo. The high pillared beeches delighted A., "making a grand aisle, their leaves dappled with sunlight,—a wonderful fawn-coloured carpet of sward beneath." At one spot they were burning charcoal: there was a clearing in the wood, and the seed of innumerable willow-herbs made a silver mist. At Waterloo we lunched at the top of the Lion Mound, which has spoilt the field. A. and the boys went to Hougoumont, looked at the red wall that the French charged, mistaking it for our redcoats, and saw the famous gateway. They took a bullet out of the wall. We stayed at the Hôtel du Musée, and made a careful tour of the whole field with maps and Siborne's volumes.

Next day we accomplished the circuit of the field, going over the French position. A. was impressed with the "wailing of the wind" at night, as if the dead were lamenting; and with the solemn feeling that all around us were the graves of so many thousand men. We saw the bank behind which our Guards lay when the last French attack was made by the "Old Guards." Sergeant Mundy, who showed us round Hougoumont, assured us that the Duke of Wellington did not say "Up, guards, and at them," but merely put his hand to his head and said "Ready." As A. observed, "That is infinitely more like him." One of the old French Imperial Guard visited the place afterwards, and said that it seemed on that day and at that hour as if our men had "risen out of the earth." The sergeant told A. a striking fact, that he sat all night on horseback in rain and thunder and lightning without anything to eat, not even tasting food till next night, yet so great was the excitement that he neither felt wet nor hunger, but that the whole time seemed to him five minutes.

We spent a week at the Hotel, A. enjoying his study of the battlefield and his long walks.

Thence we went to Luxembourg and Trèves. The last is an enchanting place—the Cathedral, the river, the Porta Nigra, the Basilica and the Palace of Constantine, and the Amphitheatre,

where so many thousands of Christians have fought with beasts, or have been bidden to slay each other. A. called the Basilica "The ideal Methodist Chapel"; outside the proportions are grand and simple. There are fine old MSS in the Museum.

We drove to Mülheim, and rowed down the Moselle in a little boat by Berncastel and Zell to Coblentz. A lovely row between hills of all shapes, sometimes clothed with vines, sometimes with forest.

*Weimar.*

A. disliked Coblentz as much as ever; we left this (going by Eisenach and seeing the Wartburg) for Weimar. The people there seemed to be rather stupid about Goethe and Schiller, and in vain we tried to impress upon our driver that we wanted to see all which concerned them. Thanks to the kindness of a soldier we got inside the palace, and saw the rooms where Goethe lived so much with the Grand Duke and Duchess. Next morning we secured a commissionaire, who took A. and the boys inside the Fürstengruft, where they saw Goethe's and Schiller's coffins lying with those of the Royal Family. Lionel had a leaf of bay given him for A. from Goethe's coffin. We were very much pleased by the cheerfulness and simplicity of Goethe's gartenhaus, which we visited. Afterwards we drove to Schiller's house, three rooms pleasant enough in spite of their bareness. His wife's guitar lay near his bed; on it a portrait of himself, said to be good, taken soon after death. The "other-world" peace of it struck A. and me. Then we went to the Church to see Lucas van Cranach's altar-piece, so interesting from the portraits of Luther and himself. The portrait of Luther as a monk I liked best. We drove to Tréport, charmingly situated on the Ilm which babbles pleasantly along.

*Sept. 1st.* Went with Mr Marshall—secretary to the Grand Duchess—to Goethe's town-house. No key there for the rooms. The old woman said that she was alone in the house, and could not possibly go and fetch it. A. was touched by seeing the "Salve" on the door-mat, and all Goethe's old boots at the entrance. Mr Marshall brought the Herr Direktor, for eight years Goethe's secretary, who courteously left his dinner to come. Mr Marshall expressed his regret that there was no time to write to Madame von Goethe for an order to see the study.

The Director made no remark at the time, but, when he had shown us the busts and gems and statuettes, and Goethe's own drawings, he took us into the sacred study. One cannot explain in words the awe and sadness with which this low dark room filled A. The study is narrow, and in proportion long. In the middle was a table with a cushion on it where Goethe would lean his arms, and a chair with a cushion where he sometimes sat, but his habit was to pace up and down and dictate to his secretary. On one side of the room was a bookcase about two-thirds up the wall, with boxes for his manuscripts. There were also visiting cards, strung like bills together, and Goethe's old, empty, wine bottles, in which the wine had left patterns like frost patterns. On the other side of the room was a calendar of things that had struck him in newspapers. Here a door opened to his bedroom. Such a melancholy little place! By the bed was an arm chair, to which at last he used to move from his bed for a little change. All round the wall, by the bed and the chair, a dark green leafy carpet or tapestry was fastened half-way up the wall of the room. On the washing-stand was some of the last medicine he took. The one window at the foot of the bed was partly boarded up. It looked I think into the garden.

*Dresden.*

After seeing Goethe's house Mr Marshall met us at the station, and saw us off for Leipzig. Next day we left Leipzig for Dresden. On our arrival at Dresden we went to the gallery. The Madonna and Child by Raffaelle struck A. and me as wonderfully "human and Divine." We seemed to see the trouble of the world in the Virgin's eyes, and the Child made A. "marvel at His majesty." Indeed there is a still majesty in the whole picture. Afterwards A. and the boys visited the Zoological Gardens and A. saw the great aurochs which interested him. Next day to the gallery, to see the Raffaelle Madonna again; we also looked at the Holbein Holy Family, which is very great, Titian's Tribute-money, and Correggio's Magdalene, etc. The day after A. and the boys went to the Green Vaults, and the splendour of the diamonds struck A. much. A German professor suddenly discovered A. and made him a long complimentary speech, which was trying. A. took us to the gallery again, and showed us the Titians, also Correggio's Virgin, La

Notte, and the Spanish pictures, and again the two great Madonnas.

*Sept. 6th.* A. and the boys went to the armoury, to the picture-gallery once more, and then to Saxon Switzerland.

*Sept. 7th.* After a very pleasant week at Dresden, we went by train to Brunswick. At night we heard tremendous crashing, as if all the windows in the house were being smashed. We asked what it meant, and were told that to-morrow a very rich young lady was to be married, and that it was the custom on the eve of a marriage to break all sorts of dishes and bottles against the bride's door. Was this the Polternacht for good luck? The houses are quaint. A. and the boys went to the crypt of the church to look at the coffins of the nine Dukes of Brunswick, who all fell in battle.

*Sept. 11th.* Aix-la-Chapelle. A. had been here before. The city looked magical as we swept through the old gates last evening, when the domes and hills stood out gold and blue in the rich sunset.

*Farringford, Queen Emma, G. F. Watts, London.*

*Sept. 28th.* Farringford. Queen Emma of the Sandwich Islands arrived, Major Hopkins and a huge native, Mr Hoapili, in attendance. Aunt Franklin came[1]. The Queen's maid and her luggage lost on the road: they arrived at midnight. We had had a throne chair made out of our Ilex wood. It was first used by the Queen. She, poor lady, wanted to stay quietly here, but she had to go to banquets, etc. about the Island. I collected money for the projected cathedral in Honolulu.

A. went with the Queen up the Down. John Welsh, the Queen's servant, said nothing would induce him to leave her, she was so good. There was a wailing thro' the seven Sandwich Islands for the Queen when she left, because the natives thought she never would return. Endless guests came in to tea. A. took her out that she might read her letters; and hid her from the guests in the summer-house in the kitchen garden ("among the cabbages" she said). A. and I were pleased with her sweet dignity of manner, and a calmness that made one think of an Egyptian statue; her voice was musical. Mr and Mrs Hoapili

[1] Lady Franklin.

sang Hawaiian songs. They sat on the ground and acted the song while they sang. They then chanted an ode to the young Prince, a wild monotonous chant. All great people's children in Hawaii have odes made to them on the day of their birth, a kind of foreshadowing of their lives. When a bard meets the hero of any ode so made he has to sing it to him.

*Oct. 2nd.* A. gave her two large magnolia blossoms on her leaving. She has an affectionate nature; something very pathetic about her.

*Oct. 6th.* A. read me some Lucretius, and the 1st Epistle of St Peter. (At work at his new poem of "Lucretius.")

This letter accompanied Robert Browning's own small selection from his poems:

19 WARWICK CRESCENT, *Oct. 10th*, 1865.

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

When I came back last year from my holiday I found a gift from you, a book; this time I find only the blue and gold thing which, such as it is, you are to take from me. I could not even put in what I pleased, but I have said all about it in the word or two of preface, as also that I beg leave to stick the bunch in your button-hole. May I beg too that Mrs Tennyson will kindly remember me?

Ever affectionately yours,

ROBERT BROWNING.

## *To Robert Browning.*

FARRINGFORD.

MY DEAR BROWNING,

Very welcome is the nosegay, not only for "the *love* in the gift," which makes me, who am physically the most unbumptious of men and authors, proud: but also for its own very peculiar flowerage and fructification, for which I think I have as high a respect as any man in Britain. I stick it into my buttonhole and feel * * *'s cork heels added to my boots.

My wife always remembers you, and another.

I too, when last in Paris, took a long look at the Hôtel de Douvres, thinking of the former time[1].

Ever yours affectionately,

A. TENNYSON.

A. and I went to our ploughman, to congratulate him on his having won the first ploughman's prize in the Isle of Wight. All the family radiant with the prize-money. The wife went off with it to buy winter shoes for her husband and the children.

Mr G. F. Watts, with his accustomed munificence, gave us the pictures that he had made of me and of the boys, and wrote to A. of the boys' picture: "If there had been any correspondence between my will and power, the picture would have been worth acceptance for itself, but I can only hope that it may have some small value as a token of friendship, and an expression of profound admiration and respect."

Mayall came with the photographs. That of A. very fine.

*My father's letter-diary from London.*

Yesterday I called with Woolner on Froude, and then we all walked to Carlyle's. Mrs C. seemed feeble, but was very glad to see me, then Carlyle walked a mile or two with us, and was agreeable and amusing as usual.

*Dec. 5th.* I called on Queen Emma twice yesterday. Our Queen had been very kind and cordial to Queen Emma, and had given her a rich gold bracelet with a serpent onyx, and a portrait of herself, and a lock of her hair. Queen Emma was off for the Continent this morning at 8 o'clock. The great man Gladstone is coming to dine with me here on Friday; a compliment; but how he can find time from the mighty press of business amazes me. I go over to Palgrave's to-morrow.

[1] See p. 16.

*Dec. 6th.* 29 Welbeck Street. I go to Palgrave's to-day, 5 York Gate, Regent's Park. I dined there yesterday and met Joseph Hooker, who told me my tropical island (in "Enoch") was all right; but X— in his illustrations has made it all wrong, putting a herd of antelopes upon it, which never occur in Polynesia.

*Dec. 7th.* York Gate. I am installed here, having come from Woolner's last night, where I dined with Mr Jenner, who has ordered my bust[1] from W. and who is going to leave it to the National Portrait Gallery; an amiable and reverential man he seems. I called on the Guests yesterday, for Schreiber saw me walking in the Green Park, and shouted to me thro' the rails, as he was riding down the street, and begged me to call. Enid was in and he; Lady Charlotte out. I must go and call on Forster to-day. I saw old Procter yesterday, better than he was, but very feeble.

*Dec. 8th.* York Gate. I was inducted into the Royal Society last night, after dining with W. White, whither Woolner accompanied me. We had a merry dinner with lots of anecdotes; there were very few people, and I went thro' it without nervousness.

*Dec. 9th.* York Gate. Yesterday at Woolner's, Gladstone, Holman Hunt, and Dr Symonds and his son. Dr S. is a famous physician at Bristol, who had come all the way to dine with Gladstone and myself. I like him much. The great man was infinitely agreeable, and delivered himself very eloquently and freely on Homer, etc. I asked him to speak to Lord Russell about Allingham's little pension, which he promised to do. He spoke too about Jamaica, and seems, tho' he suspends his judgment, to think that Eyre was so terribly in the wrong that he may have to be tried for his life.

After this dinner my father wrote to Gladstone:

[1] Mr Jenner gave this bust to me in 1893 to place in Westminster Abbey.

MY DEAR MR GLADSTONE,

As you were kind enough to say that you would forward to Lord Russell Mr Allingham's application for an increase of pension together with my petition that it might be taken into consideration, I send you A.'s letter to myself, wherein he sets forth at full what his claims are, and why he wishes them to be attended to. As I said to you at the time—the man has a true spirit of song in him, I have no doubt of it: and my opinion, I am happy to say, is confirmed by Carlyle in his letter to A. which I only do not forward because, from his letter, it does not appear that I am at liberty so to do. Carlyle also mentions some work of Allingham's (I have not seen it myself—it is possibly some preface to his projected work on Ireland) in these following terms —"Your pleasant and excellent historical introduction might, if its modesty would permit, boast itself to be the very best ever written perhaps anywhere for such a purpose. I have read it with real entertainment and instruction on my own behoof, and with real satisfaction on yours—so clear, so brief, definite, graphic; and a fine genially human tone in it." I think you will agree with me, that this testimonial from one who is a great name in Britain, and who has won his own laurels chiefly in the field of History, does go some way in establishing a case for Allingham. And for myself I really believe that, if he were set free as he says by his pension being raised to the amount required, he might do good to Ireland, and thro' Ireland to England, by accomplishing a work which under his present circumstances seems all but impossible. I may add that I have known him for years, that he is very industrious, and in his life sober and moral:—his age somewhere between 40 and 50.

Believe me, my dear Mr Gladstone,

Ever sincerely yours, A. TENNYSON.

*Dec.* 12*th.* I dine at the Deanery of St Paul's to-morrow. Sir John Lubbock has just sent me his *Prehistoric Times*, which I shall find greatly interesting. Dean Milman was very agreeable yesterday. The Stanleys did not come. Browning was here.

*Dec.* 13*th.* York Gate. The Palgraves go into the country on Monday and I leave this house, but whether I shall get beyond Winchester the first day is, I should think, doubtful. I don't much care for Lionel's sporting propensities, but then you know man is naturally "a beast of prey."

*Dec.* 14*th.* Dined at Milman's yesterday. Milman told me that Her Majesty's household do not serve on juries, and if ever I am asked again so to do, to state this, Her Majesty being supposed to be always requiring their services. I called on Tyndall yesterday and had a long chat with him about mind and matter, etc. He is coming to see me to-night at Woolner's where I dine and meet Dr Woolley the Australian and Froude.

*Dec.* 15*th.* A great gathering last night at Woolner's. Dr Woolley seems altogether of the higher class of man[1]. Thompson the Confederate was there and Browning, and innumerable anecdotes were told. To-day I dine here; nobody asked, at my request.

The following note about "The Northern Farmer" arrived from W. G. Clark:

Thompson has been staying at Fryston, where he met a Mr Creyke, a Yorkshireman, with a talent for recitation. This Mr Creyke had been staying at a farmhouse in Holderness, where in the evening the neighbouring farmers used to come and smoke. One evening he repeated "The Northern Farmer." When it was done, one of them said, "Dang it, that caps owt.

[1] Dr Woolley, the Principal of Sydney College, went down in the "London," which was wrecked during a storm in the Bay of Biscay, Jan. 11, 1866.

Now, sur, is that i' print, because if it be I'll buy t' book, cost what it may?" Creyke said, "The book contains things you mayn't like as well, so I'll write it out for you."

This he did: the farmer put it in his breast-pocket; and next day when out shooting Creyke saw him from time to time taking it out to read.

After this Mr Tennyson may claim to have rivalled Orpheus.

*Dec. 31st.* "1865–66[1]" was written. The last two lines give the monotony of the storm—the only answer to the question as to what the future will bring forth.

## 1866.

*My mother's journal.—London, Marlborough, New Forest, "Song of the Wrens," Governor Eyre.*

London. *Feb. 4th.* We found an invitation to luncheon at the Deanery (Westminster). Mr Vaughan[2] came in, and we had a delightful talk before luncheon and also at luncheon, when the Carlyles joined us. A. is fond of the Abbey and of strolling about it by himself. "How dreamlike it looks!" he said. We went to see Thackeray's bust. The Dean remarked at luncheon: "Having to do with artists and sculptors about statues and busts of great men gives fresh cause to lament their death."

*Feb. 10th.* Mr Browning[3] gave me an affectionate greeting after all these years. In the evening the Brookfields joined us, and their daughter Magdalen, with her white, gold-bordered dress, seemed, A. said, "as if she had come out of a fairy-story."

[1] Printed in *Good Words*, 1868. My father wrote to Mr Palgrave: "What a season! The wind is roaring here like thunder, and all my ilexes rolling and whitening. Indeed we have had whole weeks of wind."

[2] Brother-in-law to Dean Stanley, afterwards Dean of Llandaff.

[3] Browning writes on Feb. 19th:

I go out a great deal; but have enjoyed nothing so much as a dinner last week with Tennyson, who, with his wife and one son, is staying in town for a few weeks, and she is just what she was, and always will be, very sweet and dear; he seems to me better than ever. I met him at a large party on Saturday, also Carlyle, whom I never met at a "drum" before. *Life and Letters of Robert Browning*, p. 273.

*April 20th.* A. wrote to the Duke of Argyll:

*April 20th*, 1866.

MY DEAR DUKE,

The son's[1] sonnet is I think creditable to him both as regards feeling and execution. I read and grieved to hear of his illness in the *Times*, but he is it seems all right again now. I know nothing of politics here except from the newspapers, but I suppose the [Reform] Bill is looking up, as they say, since I left town, and that you are not going to Switzerland as you threatened.

I see that Mr Lowe did me the honour of quoting me the other night. If anyone on your side wished to make his speech culminate in a quotation which may be a prophecy, he might possibly produce an effect by quoting the last two stanzas of my address to the Queen, in the preface to my poems—

> And statesmen at her councils met
> Who knew the season when, etc.

which really would seem *à propos*.

Ever, my dear Duke, yours,

A. TENNYSON.

My mother wrote: *May 1st*, 1866. Farringford. To-day I was to have gone with A. to take Hallam to Marlborough[2], but could not.

*Marlborough.*

"I sent him to Marlborough," said my father, "because Bradley is a friend of mine, and Stanley has told me that it is the best school in England."

*May 2nd.* Marlborough. We drove to Avebury and Silbury, my father suggesting that Silbury was a

[1] Marquis of Lorne. [2] See Appendix, p. 518, for talk on Milton.

monument after some great battle. In the evening the Bradleys had a large dinner-party. Someone spoke of *Dĭplŏmăcy and Prŏgress.* "Oh!" said my father, "*why do you pronounce the word like that? pray give the ō long.*" Then turning to an excellent scholar: "You, so-and-so," he said jokingly, "you never open your mouth without making a grammatical blunder."

Bradley knowing my father's love of science had asked masters interested in geology, botany and archæology to meet him. He conversed with all of them: and praised the organist's (W. S. Bambridge's) settings of "Thou art gone to the grave" and "Lead, kindly light." At the request of Mrs Bradley he read "The Northern Farmer," and then criticised amusingly some of the boys' Prize Poems which Bradley had begged him to look through. Later in the evening he was talking on death, and quoting a Parisian story of a man having deliberately ordered and eaten a good dinner, and having afterwards committed suicide by covering his face with a chloroformed handkerchief. "That's what I should do," my father said, "if I thought there was no future life."

*May 3rd.* In view of the old cut yews (opposite his window) he began to write his ballad of "The Victim." He expressed great delight at the choir of birds in the trees here. In the afternoon we drove through Savernake Forest, ablaze with golden beeches.

After dinner the Upper Sixth came in, and at their petition he read "Guinevere," refusing however enthronement in a large arm-chair, and asserting it was "too conspicuous."

*May 4th.* My father walked about the garden, finishing "The Victim." He was full of fun, and at luncheon told the following story about Dr Abernethy:

"A farmer went to the great doctor complaining of discomfort in the head, weight and pain. The doctor said, 'What quantity of ale do you take?' 'Oh, I taaks

ma yaale pretty well.' Abernethy (with great patience and gentleness), 'Now then, to begin the day, breakfast. What time?' 'Oh at haafe-past seven.' 'Ale then? How much?' 'I taakes my quart.' 'Luncheon?' 'At 11 o'clock I gets another snack.' 'Ale then?' 'O yees, my pint and a haafe.' 'Dinner?' 'Haafe-past one.' 'Any ale then?' 'Yees, yees, another quart then.' 'Tea?' 'My tea's at haafe-past five.' 'Ale then?' 'Noa, noa.' 'Supper?' 'Noine o'clock.' 'Ale then?' 'Yees, yees. I taakes my fill then. I goes asleep arterwards.' Like a lion aroused Abernethy was up, opened the street door, shoved the farmer out and shouted out, 'Go home, sir, and let me never see your face again: go home, drink your ale and be damned.' The farmer rushed out aghast, Abernethy pursuing him down the street with shouts of 'Go home, sir, and be damned.'"

The Bradley children brought in some wild cherry blossoms, and my father said, "You have ruthlessly picked the future fruit: do you remember Wordsworth's poem about picking strawberry-blossoms?" He never much liked flowers being gathered: he would say he preferred "to see them growing naturally."

In the afternoon we drove to Martinsell and walked over the mounds, and looked at the relics of the British village.

After dinner my father was again asked to read by Mrs Bradley: "Will it be too cruel to ask you to read 'The Grandmother'?" "No, I can't read to-night, and I must be in a proper mood for that and I am not." "Oh well, do give us all the pleasure of hearing you read, only choose something else." "How can you ask me when you know I only read to my intimate friends?" "I know you don't, but I know you will read to *our* intimate friends. No others are here to-night." "Well well, but not 'The Grandmother.'" A Belgian governess,

Mdlle. Stapps, was on the chair just behind him. He said, "I can't read 'The Grandmother' properly except after breakfast, when I am weak and tremulous; fortified by dinner and a glass of port I am too vigorous." "Well, read 'The Northern Farmer' then." So he did: and asked Mdlle. how much she understood. "Pas un mot, Monsieur."

Then he read "The Grandmother," and after that four pieces out of Hood's *Whims and Oddities*, "Faithless Nelly Gray," "Faithless Sally Brown," "Tim Turpin" and "Ben Battle." He explained the play on words in them to Mdlle. who was "excessivement enchantée." He laughed till the tears came at some things he read. This went on till 11.50, and then we separated.

*May 5th.* My father returned home, leaving me at school[1].

## *Letters from friends.*

*Letter from Rev. J. Waite (my father's schoolmaster at Louth), thanking him for a set of his books.*

MANBY RECTORY, near LOUTH,
*May 8th*, 1866.

MY DEAR SIR,

I return you my best thanks for your immortal works forwarded to me by your bookseller, which I shall not fail to have placed on a shelf in the library of the new Grammar School in Louth with the works of your two elder brothers, as a contribution more precious than gold or silver, being really Aurea Carmina; in memory of the elementary part of your education received by all of you in that royal institution. Had I been asked in your boyish days which of the three would probably scale the highest summit of Parnassus, I almost fancy I should have awarded the palm to primogeniture, and I am still almost disposed to say

"Arcades omnes, Et cantare pares et respondere parati."

[1] This account is mainly taken from Mrs Bradley's diary.

The two seniors have been however far distanced in the quantity, if not in the quality of their productions. I am ashamed to confess that I had never before seen all your works; but they will now form a portion of my daily reading, as an agreeable dessert after my more plain repast of Divinity and my old school books.

Your sincere friend,

J. WAITE (in his 86th year).

*June 9th.* A letter from Mr Twisleton arrived, asking A. to sign an application for a Memorial to Keble in Westminster Abbey.

3 RUTLAND GATE, LONDON,
*June 8th*, 1866.

DEAR MR TENNYSON,

I thank you for your note and I am very glad that you consent to sign the application for a Memorial in Westminster Abbey to Mr Keble. The application shall be duly forwarded to you for your signature.

I may add that I was acquainted with your friend A. H. Hallam, and that I never met a man whom on a short acquaintance I liked so much. The last time I saw him could not have been long before the fatal event in 1833. I had been at Vienna and had been travelling with my mother in what is called the Austrian Switzerland. On a very fine day we had left Ischl on our way to Salzburg, and just as we were arriving at the brow of the hill whence travellers from Salzburg have the first view of the lake of Ischl I met him in a carriage with his father. We both left our carriages and I had about five minutes' conversation with him, each telling the other what he might expect to see. He was in the highest spirits, expressing himself delighted with the beauty of the country which could be visited from Salzburg, and he seemed to me in the florid health of one embrowned by exercise in the sun. It was only afterwards that it struck me as possible that the supposed signs of health might have been owing to fatal fulness of blood. I relate these facts thinking they may interest you, as it is not likely that many Englishmen who knew him previously could have seen him later than myself.

Yours very truly, EDWARD TWISLETON.

New Forest. *July 15th.* An enchanting drive through glades and lawns: grand groups of trees and ferns, and a rich smell of heather. The wild ponies formed very pretty groups on knolls backed by forest. We saw brilliant woodpeckers, and strange birds flashed here and there across the open spaces "with vibratory wings." We went to Mark Ash (where the biggest beeches are): the "green gloom" as A. called it very fine under the old and huge trees.

*July 17th.* Two mornings A. wandered alone. One day the forest was "mystical and sad, wrapped in cloud."

These lines (in "The Last Tournament") were made on an old oak here:

> A stump of oak half-dead,
> From roots like some black coil of carven snakes,
> Clutch'd at the crag, and started thro' mid air
> Bearing an eagle's nest.

*July 18th.* A. and Hallam set out to walk to Romsey Church. A. thought that it was one of the simplest and finest churches in England; it reminded us of William's church at Caen. Lionel and I followed, driving, and found them, as I thought we should, near the river Test. Part of it higher up A. said was "every square inch a ripple," and at Romsey he was charmed with the swift clear stream gliding over its rushy bed.

*July 19th.* A. walked to Beaulieu Abbey thro' the woods, Lionel and I drove over the heath. A postman of the Stony Cross district told A. that all the great yew trees, which A. had been looking for, had been cut down and sold to a cabinet-maker. "They offered them to me for a few pounds," he said.

Farringford. *August 6th.* A.'s birthday: we gave a dinner to the farm men. Lincolnshire "frumenty" caused great amusement among them, many not having the courage to touch it.

*August 17th.* We took Lionel to school at Hastings. A. walked twice back along the road with him to comfort him at parting. We then left for Park House, Maidstone, by Battle Abbey and Tunbridge Wells. In the evening, at the Lushingtons' request, A. read "The Victim, or The Norse Queen," "The Voyage," and "All along the Valley." A. and Edmund talked metaphysics: they have engrossed A. much of late.

Mr (now Sir) George Grove wrote asking A. to make a cycle of songs for music:

Mr Payne tells me he has communicated to you a little proposal of mine for a Book of Songs[1], and at his request I send you Heine's *Lieder* because I alluded to them in my letter as being often used by the German musicians to set to music. Those I was more particularly thinking of are the Songs I to VIII, p. 36–45, which Schumann has set as *Liederkreis*, and those beginning p. 106, out of which he has made a similar selection. But why one should send you patterns of songs when your own "Little Birdie" (to name but one) is a perfect model, I don't know. It was more because of the way the Germans have of connecting several songs together. If the idea of the first song could be brought back again in the last it would help the composer very much, for nothing is so charming in music as to wind off a composition in that way. Beethoven (as great in small things as in the greatest) has done it with masterly effect in a Liederkreis called "An die ferne Geliebte[2]." If you like I will write that out for you with the greatest pleasure.

We have subscribed to the defence of Governor Eyre. A. was anxious about the facts in Jamaica, not knowing whether to accede to the request of the Committee that he would place his name on it; as he could not approve of all the late proceedings. The question of course was, "Could Governor Eyre have prevented revolution and massacre otherwise?"

*To the Secretary of Governor Eyre's Defence Committee.*

*October*, 1866.

SIR,

I thank you and the Committee for the honour done to me.

I sent my small subscription as a tribute to the nobleness of the man, and as a protest against the spirit in which a servant of the State, who has saved to us one

[1] The result was "The Song of the Wrens."

[2] My father often asked that these songs, and *Molly's Abschied*, might be sung to him: he was fond of Beethoven's music.

of the Islands of the Empire, and many English lives, seems to be hunted down.

But my entering my name on your Committee might be looked upon as pledge that I approve of all the measures of Governor Eyre. I cannot assert that I do this, neither would I say that he has erred, my knowledge of the circumstances not being sufficient.

In the meantime, the outbreak of our Indian Mutiny remains as a warning to all but madmen against want of vigour and swift decisiveness.

I have the honour to be

Your most obedient servant,

A. TENNYSON.

## 1867.

*My mother's journal.—Bayard Taylor, Hallam's illness, Blackdown, Lyme Regis, and South Devon.*

A. has written a letter to Longfellow, "We English and Americans should all be brothers as none other among the Nations can be; and some of us, come what may, will always be so I trust."

*Feb. 21st.* Mr and Mrs Bayard Taylor came. A. gave them some of Mr Ellis' sherry made in 1815, called "Waterloo Sherry," and some of Mr Ellis' yet more "gorgeous wines." She (a charming German lady) told A. the striking story of her uncle, now an old man of 70 or 80, the son of the late Duke of Saxe-Gotha's chief huntsman. He was at the time of Napoleon's highest power about fifteen, and was so wrought upon by hearing Napoleon continually called by his countrymen "the chief enemy of the human race," that he determined to shoot the great man while he was passing alone down one of the long corridors of the palace, as he often did when he visited the Duke, of whom he was fond. One day accordingly the youth posted himself in a corner of one of the bay windows of the corridor, rifle in hand. He heard the Emperor's footstep in the distance coming

nearer and nearer. As Napoleon approached, he put his hand to the trigger. But Napoleon, without stopping, just turned and fixed his great eagle eye upon him, in such a terrible fashion that the youth was paralysed with fear, trembled from head to foot, almost swooned away, and let his rifle drop with a clang upon the ground. No notice was taken of this incident.

Then A. spoke of Napoleon coming in hot and dusty from battle, and seeing the Duchess of Weimar, and saying, "Êtes-vous la Duchesse de Weimar?" of her simple answer, "Oui, Sieur"; and of his thereupon shouting savagely, "J'écraserai votre mari." "Wellington said of Napoleon," A. added, "that he was 'emphatically *not* a gentleman.'"

*March* 1*st*. A telegram arrived, telling of Hallam's serious attack on his lungs. We started off by the next boat to Marlborough.

We telegraphed for Dr Symonds at Bristol.

This is all I could record about the terrible time. A. was very calm, but deeply moved. At the crisis he said humbly, "I have made up my mind to lose him: God will take him pure and good, straight from his mother's lessons. Surely it would be better for him than to grow up such a one as I am." He was wrapped up in the boy. He talked a great deal about "our all being gathered up somehow into the all-absorbing love of God, into a state infinitely higher than we can now conceive of[1]."

He wrote to Sir John Simeon:

*March*, 1867.

MY DEAR SIMEON,

He is better to-day, yesterday we thought he was going, for the pulse stopt and he was seized with a coup de nerfs. We telegraphed for Dr Symonds of Bristol, who gave us good hope that he is past the worst and will recover; it was an attack of pneumonia with low symptoms.

Yours ever, A. T.

We returned to Farringford where Hallam speedily recovered, thence went to Hindhead, and before going A. wrote to F. T. Palgrave.

[1] These words of my father's are quoted from the Bradley diary.

*23rd March*, 1867.

DEAR PALGRAVE,

I suppose I may come up to town some time after we are settled in our farm-house, where I have taken rooms for ourselves and three servants for two years, and can have them for six if I choose. We go there in about a week, more or less: there will be one room for a guest.

I don't give the name of the place because I wish it to be kept secret: I am not flying from the cockneys here to tumble in among the cockneys there I hope: tho' some of my friends assert that it will be so, and that there will be more cockneys and of a worse kind, but I don't believe them, for the house is quite solitary and five miles from town or village. You ask whether Doré's illustrations are a success. I liked the first four I saw very much, tho' they were not quite true to the text, but the rest not so well; one I hate, that where the dead lady[1] is stuck up in a chair, with her eyes open, as if her father had forgotten to close them; or as if she had opened them again, for they are closed in the voyage down the river. On the whole I am against illustrators, except one could do with them as old Mr Rogers did, have them to breakfast twice a week and explain your own views to them over and over again.

My wife (thanks for your enquiries) had been shut up in the house for nearly three months, with cough and cold. The Queen sent her an invitation to go with me to Osborne, but I was obliged to make her excuses, and went alone. You say that you expect another little one in June: ought I to congratulate you or condole? Love to Mrs Palgrave from both.

Believe me yours ever,

A. TENNYSON.

[1] Elaine.

*April 29th.* We arrived at Grayshott farm, where we were to spend the early summer. In the copses the nightingales were singing; the anemones were out in all the woods.

*May 18th.* A. has bought Morris' *British Birds.* One evening we heard the fern owl quite close to us, and the snap, snap of the wings as it flew away. The boys had been that day with their father to White's Selborne, and climbed the "Hanger." He liked the pretty village, and the Bells who lived in White's house.

He read the new version of one of the "Window Songs," "Take my Love"; Heine's "Songs"; and some of the *Reign of Law*[1]. The chapter on "Law in Politics" was specially interesting to us. The quotations from A. expressed some of the deepest truths. Seeing these, I felt that perhaps I had been wrong in not having fulfilled my half-formed purpose of making a book of "Great Thoughts and Sayings of Tennyson." Perhaps not, for I always think great thoughts and sayings lose so much of their life and point when drawn from their natural context. With the boys he was reading *Flodden Field*, the *Prometheus* of Æschylus, and the 1st *Georgic.*

*June 5th.* Mrs Gilchrist and Mr Simmons having taken endless trouble in communicating with Mr Lucas about Blackhorse Copse on Blackdown[2], we went there in an odd procession, Lionel on a donkey with a lady's saddle, I driving in the basket-carriage, the rest walking. The wheels spun round on the axles without touching ground in some of the deep ruts, and the carriage had to be lifted over, William leading the pony carefully. At last we reached the charming ledge on the heathery down. This looks over an immense view bounded by the South-downs on the south, by Leith Hill on the north. Copse-wood surrounds the ledge, and the hill protects it from the north-west. The foxglove was in full bloom. A. helped me down the mountain-path. We all enjoyed the day thoroughly.

Mr Lear came from Liphook: he liked our neighbourhood so

[1] By the Duke of Argyll.

[2] Now Aldworth. My mother, writing this June of our home-life, says: "I think it is a thing to be very thankful for, having a home of one's very own, especially taking in the hope that one's children may live on there when we are gone, and have it made still more a home by the memories of childhood."

much that he said we were to look out for some land for him hereabouts.

He told an excellent story about a misquotation of a passage in "You ask me, why." A friend of his remarked to him: "It is a well-known fact that Tennyson hates travelling." "Nonsense," answered Lear, "he loves it." "On the contrary," the friend retorted, "he hates it, and he says so himself somewhere:

'And I will *die* before I see
The palms and temples of the South.'"

Among other letters at this time A. wrote the following to an unknown correspondent, a Mr Tennyson of Chester, who had named his child "Alfred."

*June 13th*, 1867.

DEAR SIR,

I have not been at home for many weeks or your kindly letter would not have remained so long without an answer, notwithstanding the multitude of letters, which really make it impossible for me to answer all. You have paid me a great compliment, nay, it is more than a compliment—in naming your son after me.

I wish him a useful and happy career, and only hope that he will take a better model than his namesake to shape his life by.

It is doubtless a pleasure to know that I have had sometimes the power to cheer the soldier, whose life of devotion to his country I honour; and few things in the world ought to gratify me so deeply as the assurance that anything I may have written has had an influence for good.

Believe me, dear sir, yours truly,

A. TENNYSON.

He also wrote to the Duke of Argyll:

STOATLEY FARM, HASLEMERE,
1867.

MY DEAR DUKE,

I shall be very glad to read your book [*The Reign of Law*], which I suppose is waiting for me at Farringford. We are at present lodging at a farmhouse here in the neighbourhood of Haslemere. My wife has always had a fancy for the sandy soil and heather-scented air of this part of England, and we are intending to buy a few acres, and build a little home here, whither we may escape when the cockneys are running over my lawns at Freshwater. I am sorry that I did not see Lord Lorne, but I will call for the calumet[1] when I go to town. It is odd that the Americans always send me pipes, or tobacco, as if I cared for nothing else in this world; and their tobacco is not my tobacco, nor their pipes my pipes: bird's-eye and a Milo-cutty being more according to my fancy than costlier things. I don't however mean to undervalue Longfellow's gift. I envy you your journey. I have been along the Corniche, as you may read in my little poem "The Daisy." I don't suppose that Europe, or Asia perhaps, has a more splendid piece of coast-scenery, but at this time of year you will hardly see it in perfection. Perhaps however if the Autumn tints remain they may more than make up for the loss of that opulence of summer, which seemed to satiate heart and eye when I looked from the hill above Nice, over rock and ruin and down-streaming vineyard, to the many coloured Mediterranean. We did not get further than Florence, and Rome is only a dream to me and not a very distinct one.

[1] Sent by Longfellow.

Mine and my wife's love to the Duchess, and all joy to you both. You must feel like the starling that has got out, and the sweets of office outsweetened by the sweets of out of office. Hallam is at Marlborough and flourishing; Lionel with Dr Hunt near Hastings. Lady Edith is, we trust, quite recovered, and enjoying her tour.

Ever yours,

A. TENNYSON.

*June 16th.* The Blackdown land was bought: Mr Estcourt being most kind and helpful. A. met Mr Knowles at the station; he did not recognize him; but, when Mr Knowles had called at Farringford, A. had said to him as he does to most strangers, "I am so short-sighted that I shall not know you if I meet you unless you speak to me." Mr Knowles accordingly spoke to him, reminding him of this; and A. (knowing that Mr Knowles was an architect) said, "You had better build me my house (on Blackdown)."

Mr Knowles came to luncheon and looked at our sketch and plans, and took them home to put them in "working form," as he said.

## *Lyme and South Devon.*

On August 23rd my father left for Bridport.

He was led on to Lyme by the description of the place in Miss Austen's *Persuasion*, walking thither the nine miles over the hills from Bridport. On his arrival he called on Palgrave, and, refusing all refreshment, he said at once: "Now take me to the Cobb, and show me the steps from which Louisa Musgrove fell." Palgrave and he then walked to the undercliff, "a noble natural terrace, edging the sea and tossed into endless small mounds and valleys."

Palgrave writes:

Tennyson said, "this exactly represents some of the romantic landscape before my mind's eye in the 'Idylls': little winding glades, closed all round with grassy mounds and wild shrubs, where one might fancy the sudden appearance of a knight riding, or a spell-bound damsel." This peculiar character (which was partly suggested to him by the backgrounds of mediæval illuminations) he also once pointed out in a certain field of his own (called Pathacre) beyond his summer-house at Farringford.

After this the friends went to Princetown and Dartmoor. Palgrave writes:

Our way lay right across Dartmoor, desolate and eerie even under the brightest sun, to Princetown: a village gloomy in itself from its high wind-exposed site, and more so from the great convict-prison, whose inhabitants we saw working in sad files and guarded by rifles from escaping. The inn, rough and small but clean, was in accord with the surroundings. One bedroom with two huge four-posters was allotted us: and Tennyson lay in his with a candle, reading hard the book which on this trip he had taken for his novel-companion, and at every disengaged moment opened whilst rambling over the Moor. This chanced to be one of Miss Yonge's deservedly popular tales, wherein a leading element is the deferred Church Confirmation of a grown-up person. On Tennyson read, till I heard him cry with satisfaction, "I see land! Mr * * is just going to be confirmed!" after which, darkness and slumber.

Thence they made their way to Tavistock, Dartmouth, Salcombe and Exeter.

*My mother's journal.*

*Dec.* 1*st.* "The Song of the Wrens" ("Window Songs") and "The Victim," printed at the Canford Press, received from Sir Ivor Guest. A. is reading Hebrew (*Job* and the *Song of Solomon* and *Genesis*): he talked much about his Hebrew, and about all-pervading Spirit being more understandable by him than solid matter. He brought down to me his psalm-like poem, "Higher Pantheism." Louie [daughter of Sir John Simeon], who was with us a day or two later, said: "As I sat

at breakfast, he came behind me, and in fun dropped on my plate the MS of 'Wages[1],' which he had perfected during the night."

"Vivien" and "Guinevere," illustrated by Doré, were brought out at Christmas.

A. wrote to the Master of Trinity (answering an invitation which was accepted in Feb. 1868):

1867.

A smoking room!

If I put pipe to mouth *there*, should I not see gray Elohim ascending out of the earth, him whom we capped among the walks in golden youth, and hear a voice, "Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up?" I happened to say to Clark that, from old far-away undergraduate recollections of the unapproachable and august seclusion of Trinity Lodge, Cambridge, I should feel more blown out with glory by spending a night under your roof, than by having lived Sultanlike for a week in Buckingham Palace. Now, you see, I was not proposing a visit to you, but speaking as after wine and over a pipe, and falling into a trance with my eyes open. At the same time, your invitation and that of Mrs Thompson (to whom present all my best thanks) is so kindly and hearty, that I may, I can't say when at this moment, try to realize this vision, and if I do I will let you know some time beforehand. Meantime, my dear T., with my wife's best regards,

I am yours ever, A. TENNYSON.

And to J. Kenward:

FARRINGFORD, 1867.

MY DEAR SIR,

I am much obliged to you for the first volume of *Barddas*, which I have not yet seen, but which will arrive in due time from Moxon's. I envy

[1] Printed in *Macmillan's Magazine*, Feb. 1868.

your visit to Villemarqué. When I was in Brittany, —stopping at Auray, I think,—I asked the landlord how far off he lived, and I found it was some 14 or 15 miles, a long way to post, and it was not certain whether he were at home or not. Believe me, dear Sir, in great haste, for (substitute "letters" for "bairns") I am like the old woman who lived in a shoe.

Yours truly, A. TENNYSON.

## 1868.

*My mother's journal.—"The Lover's Tale," Hebrew Studies, Longfellow, Darwin, building of Aldworth, Tintern, Irish Church Bill.*

*January 11th.* A. read the article on the Talmud by Deutsch. He talked of publishing "The Lover's Tale," because someone was sure to publish it some day. I urged this. We heard that written copies were being circulated. He said: "Allowance must be made for redundance of youth. I cannot pick it to pieces and make it up again. It is rich and full, but there are mistakes in it." For instance he pointed out one in the passage beginning: "Even as the all-enduring camel, etc.," "There could not have been a crimson colouring in the middle of the moonlight night. The poem is the breath of young love[1]."

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*January 24th.* Canon Warburton and the Bradleys visited us. Mrs Bradley writes:

Mr Tennyson said to us that it would not be easy to understand the allusions in "The Lover's Tale," unless we knew the story in Boccaccio from which it was taken; that it was the tale of a lover, whose mistress became the wife of another man. She fell ill, died apparently, and was buried. The old lover went to her tomb: on opening her coffin he found her heart beating: he took her home to his mother's house, where she gave birth to a child. Afterwards the lover invited his friends

[1] My father had some copies of the poem printed to see what it was like.

and neighbours to a feast, among these the husband of the lady. In the middle of the feast the lover brought in a veiled figure, and asked the guests: "To whom would belong by right a dog, whose master turned him out to die, and which was rescued and restored to life and health by another?" The unanimous opinion was given that "the man who saved the dog had a right to him." The lover unveiled the lady with her babe, and said to the husband, "I restore you your own." He then rode away and was seen no more.

*Jan. 25th.* Mr Tennyson told us how much better he felt spiritually, mentally, and bodily, while engaged on some long poem; and how often in the intervals he found time hang heavily, and a longing came for regular work. He said to my husband: "I envy you your life of hard, regular, useful, important work."

He told us that he taught himself Italian by writing all the words and sentences he wanted especially to remember (making a kind of private grammar) on the sides of a large old-fashioned mantelpiece, in his Somersby bedroom. He wrote them in a fine small hand, very elaborately; and he got them up whilst he was dressing and smoking: but he went away for a few days, and when he came back the writing had all vanished. He blamed the housemaid, who answered "contemptuously," that she "had washed off the nasty, dirty mess and cleaned the mantelpiece nicely for him." He is full of the *Song of Solomon*, reading it in Hebrew: and he said that most people knew nothing about it, that in the coarsely-painted, misrepresented, ununderstandable story, given in the Bible translation, there is hardly a trace of what he calls "The most perfect Idyl of the faithful love of a country girl for her shepherd, and of her resistance to the advances of a great king, that ever was written." The study of Hebrew was a great pleasure to him: it occupied his whole mind and time.

He told us that he was always puzzled by that expression in the *Song of Solomon*, chap. iv., "Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep...whereof every one bears twins, and none is barren among them," but that in his present study of Hebrew he had discovered its meaning. "Every tooth corresponds to its fellow, and there are no gaps among them."

*Jan. 28th.* A Play in the evening. Play over, the drawing-room was cleared for dancing. Mr Tennyson led off Lady

Simeon, Sir John was my partner. Mr Tennyson thoroughly gave himself up to the enjoyment of waltzing, and did not sit down once; he was very merry and full of fun.

*Jan.* 31*st.* Mr Tennyson left for Haslemere, to fix the site of the new house on Blackdown. The name of the plot of land, "Black-horse Copse," was changed to "Aldworth." Some of Mrs Tennyson's family came from a village of that name near Streatley in Berks: where there is a curious old church with the old tombs of her Sellwood ancestors.

My father received the following letter from the Reverend W. Warburton (afterwards Canon of Winchester):

WINCHESTER, *Jan.* 14*th*, 1868.

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

On the chance of your having found it "tanti" to make your way through the outworks of Hebrew Grammar etc.[1], I send you a little book which seems to me to be helpful. If you want a nice book to read with *Solomon's Song*, I recommend you Ginsburg's *Coheleth.* He is of course a German, but writes in English. *Solomon's Song* is only eight short chapters, and

[1] Canon Warburton writes the following note on this letter:

This belongs to a passage in your dear and honoured father's life not generally known, namely, his beginning the study of Hebrew with a view to making a metrical version, or failing this a new prose version, at once poetical and correct, of the *Book of Job.* In connection with this undertaking (which was found, unfortunately, to present fatal difficulties) I remember him one day turning over the pages of Renan's wonderful translation of *Job*, in my house at Winchester, and coming upon the famous passage about the War-horse—"Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?" "Qui revêt son cou d'une crinège flottante?" "Why, that is downright prose! I think I could do better than that." "He saith among the trumpets Ha! Ha!" "Au premier bruit de la trompette il dit 'Allons!'" "What a very French horse!" Also in connection with this project, I may remind you that he one day asked the late Master of Balliol (then staying at Farringford) to give him a literal translation of one of the verses. "But I can't read Hebrew," faltered the Master. "What," he exclaimed, "you the Priest of a religion, and can't read your own sacred Books!"

W. WARBURTON.

very nearly comes up to *Job* in interest, when properly translated, and has a much more curious history.

With kindest remembrances to Mrs Tennyson,

Believe me ever sincerely yours,

W. WARBURTON.

P.S. Ginsburg is barely half an inch thick.

In answer to Mr Warburton's letter my father wrote:

*Jan. 21st*, 1868.

MY DEAR WARBURTON,

No Ginsburg yet; and I looked rather reckoningly for it every morning. What is the publisher's name? will you write again? or shall I tell mine to get it for me? I flatter myself that I have hit upon something like the right sound of the ȝ. I can produce a sound in the throat (for is it not a guttural?) something between a *y* and a *g*, and easily melting into a vowel, where the ȝ is supposed to be soft.

Ever yours, A. TENNYSON.

*My mother's journal.—Farringford.*

*April.* There has been a great deal of smoke in the yew-trees this year. One day there was such a cloud that it seemed to be a fire in the shrubbery. [It was then that he wrote the speech of Ambrosius, etc. in "The Holy Grail" with the lines about this "smoke," that is, the pollen of the yew blown and scattered by the wind.

O brother, I have seen this yew-tree smoke,
Spring after spring, for half a hundred years.

He would say: "I made most of 'The Holy Grail' walking up and down my field 'Maiden's Croft.'" "In Memoriam," Section XXXIX., was also written at this time.]

Many pirated editions of the poems having been smuggled into England, a letter is written to Mr Disraeli, begging him to try and stop this illicit trade.

He answered as follows:

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *April 15th*, 1868.

DEAR MR TENNYSON,

I have sent your papers up to town, that the matter may be examined and reported on to me by competent persons. You will hear officially in due course, and may rely upon your interests being not neglected.

I would not, however, have you answered only by a secretary, and therefore I trouble you with this to say that I remember our acquaintance, and am proud of it, and am always

Faithfully yours, B. DISRAELI.

*April 23rd.* Shakespeare's birthday. A. laid the foundation stone of Aldworth. Mrs Gilchrist had seized the few minutes before post after the laying of the stone to write to me. Weather glorious, Sir John and Lady Simeon and Louie and Mr Knowles there. Sir John said a few simple and appropriate words when the stone was laid. A. in excellent spirits; he was pleased with the inscription on the stone—"Prosper thou the work of our hands, O prosper thou our handiwork."

He wrote to Baron von Tauchnitz about his edition of the poems:

FARRINGFORD, *April 29th*, 1868.

MY DEAR SIR,

I pray your pardon for not having answered you earlier. I scarce know by what carelessness, or fatality, I have omitted, till now, to acknowledge yours of February 25th; but finding your letter lately at the bottom of my pocket, I was struck with my own ungraciousness, and, as I say, pardon my negligence. I am quite aware that I made rather a bad bargain with you, in selling the continental copyright for so small a sum, and my publisher affirms (whether rightly or not) that I annually lose some hundreds of pounds by this transaction. I am also aware that the royalty you offer me now is all of your free grace, and that I have no claim upon you. I can only hope that my

accepting this offer will not be made a pretext by sellers (of course I am not including yourself) and buyers for introducing more copies into England. Accept my thanks therefore.

Believe me, my dear sir, yours very truly,

A. TENNYSON.

I hope your son I had the pleasure of seeing once at Farringford is well and prospering.

*Part of a letter from Mr Jowett.*

*May*, 1868.

I am glad that Alfred is thinking of Hildebrand. I remember a long time ago reading Bowden's Life of him, and either the man or the book struck me greatly.

Hildebrand's dying in exile might give an opportunity of drawing first the Roman Catholic Ideal, secondly, the impossibility of it, notwithstanding its grandeur.

* * * * * *

I thought "Lucretius[1]" a most noble poem, and that is the universal impression.

I cannot see any reason why Alfred should not write better and better as long as he lives, and as Mr Browning says that he hopes and intends to do.

I know that a poet is an inspired person, who is not to be judged by ordinary rules, nor do I mean to interfere with him. But I can never see why some of the dreams of his youth should not still be realized[2].

With love to him and the boys,

Believe me, dear Mrs Tennyson,

affectionately yours,

B. JOWETT.

*July 15th.* Mr Longfellow arrived with a party of ten. Very English he is, we thought. A. considered his "Hiawatha" his most original poem, and he quoted his translation, "Though

[1] Printed in *Macmillan's Magazine*, May, 1868.

[2] The completion of the "Idylls."

the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small." Both poets admired Platen's *In der Nacht.*

*July 16th.* The Longfellows and he talked much of spiritualism, for he was greatly interested in that subject, but he suspended his judgment, and thought that, if in such manifestations there is anything, "Pucks, not the spirits of dead men, reveal themselves." We invited forty or fifty neighbours to tea. Mr Longfellow spoke kindly and graciously to each guest: Mrs Fraser Tytler and her daughters were among them, and Mr Longfellow said, in his old-fashioned, courteous way, "It was worth while coming to England to see such young ladies[1]."

The Longfellows were all charmed with our Down. Indeed I believe the ladies wished to remain on the Island[2].

*July 18th.* Poor little Alamayu, King Theodore of Abyssinia's son, came with Captain Speedy. The Captain said that Alamayu would not sleep without both his (Captain Speedy's) arms round him lest the Evil One should take him. Alamayu's nerves had been greatly shaken by the siege of Magdala, and the knowledge of his father's fate. King Theodore had killed himself, when the English had scaled the rock of Magdala, and his body had been found just inside the gate of the city. Captain Speedy tried to put the boy off when he began to speak of this, but he said, "Oh, I know it is so, I heard them tell all about it." He exclaimed that our English bread was the best thing he had ever tasted. When he drove past the large ilex here, he said, "Take care: there will be an elephant in that jungle."

*July 20th.* To Eton, to enter Lionel there, as his health could not endure the cold climate of Marlborough. We went to St George's Chapel. A. and Hallam rowed in Mr Warre's boat to the boat-race.

*July 25th.* We drove to Tintern. A pleasant little cottage inn. We saw the golden cornfields thro' the windows of the beautiful Abbey, "the happy autumn fields[3]." We climbed up the Wind Cliff, a glorious view of the Wye joining the Severn, bounded by dark woods crowning the cliffs.

[1] Afterwards Mrs G. F. Watts and Mrs Edward Liddell.

[2] Longfellow writes (July 19th) to Mrs Fields: "We came last night from Freshwater, where we had passed two happy days with Tennyson, not at his house, but mostly with him. He was very cordial and amiable; and gave up his whole time to us. At Farringford your memory is fresh and fragrant."

[3] Cf. Vol. I. p. 252.

To Chepstow, thence to the Castle of Caerphilly.

*Aug. 17th.* Farringford. Mr Darwin called, and seemed to be very kindly, unworldly, and agreeable. A. said to him, "Your theory of Evolution does not make against Christianity": and Darwin answered, "No, certainly not." In the afternoon the Dean of Chichester and Sir William Wood (afterwards Lord Hatherley) called. It was very interesting to see the old friends together. Dr Hook asked A. to read "Enoch Arden." He replied he could not to-day. Dr Hook thereupon began in fun to read it so badly that A. clutched the book, "No, I cannot stand that," and read it all to them.

*Sept. 9th.* A. read me a bit of his "San Graal," which he has now begun.

*Sept. 11th.* He read me more of the "San Graal": very fine. We drove on the Down. Kingfishers and oyster-catchers seen. Last night he went to Mr Pritchard's to look thro' his telescope, and was charmed with the Nebula in Hercules, "that mighty firmament"; and with Jupiter and his four moons "filling all the field," and as he said "more *homey*"—the planet seeming so much more akin to earth.

*Sept. 14th.* He has almost finished the "San Graal" in about a week (he had seen the subject clearly for some time). It came like a breath of inspiration. I was pleased to think that the Queen and the Crown Princess wished him to write it.

*Sept. 23rd.* We took Lionel to Eton, and left him in Mr Stone's house. At Mr Warre's request A. read the "San Graal" MS complete in the garden.

Of his views on the Irish Church Bill I wrote to Mr W. C. Bennett:

"We look with anxiety to the Irish Church Bill, feeling that the only wise course, as far as we see, is to retain the Endowment, apportioning part to the English Church in Ireland, part to Educational purposes, or any other equally sacred for the good of the Roman Catholics.

Any severance of Church and State is, we think, above all things to be deprecated, as fostering the common tendency to look upon parts of man as man instead of the whole being. I write this seeing how much interest you take in politics, and feeling how much we all ought to take."

*Oct.* 10*th.* A. wrote to Mr Gladstone about the alleged bad treatment of the Fenians in prison, enclosing *Lays of a Convict:*

MY DEAR MR GLADSTONE,

The enclosed has been sent to me, possibly to you also: if not, read it now; it seems to me a terrible cry. I don't much believe in the accuracy of the Irishman generally:—but I wish you, who enlightened us formerly on the Neapolitan prisons, to consider whether here too there be not a grievous wrong to be righted.

Yours ever, A. TENNYSON.

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*An unpublished Epigram by A.* (*written about this time*).

*By a Darwinian.*

How is it that men have so little grace,
When a great man's found to be bad and base,
That they chuckle and chatter and mock?
We come from apes—and are far removed—
But rejoice when a bigger brother has proved
That he springs from the common stock.

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*November.* A. went to stay with Mr Knowles at Clapham Common.

*My father's letter-diary.*

*November.* The Hollies, Clapham Common. I have sent the "Grail" to be *printed*, and I will send a copy when it comes. I read it last night to Strahan and Pritchard, who professed themselves delighted. I am grieved for the poor old shepherd losing his wife. Jowett's letter is very kind, but I do not like Lionel's going by rail alone to Oxford. I went to Miss Eden's, where we tried to move a table mesmerically. Browning came in, and returned with me and Knowles to dinner, where again I read the "Grail," and Browning said it was my "best and highest." B. is coming again to-night to read part of his new poem[1], also Macmillan.

*Nov. 21st.* I do not think I can possibly come down while this business[2] is yet pending, for it is not yet finished. In the meantime I have written to Pritchard (who is on the election committee on the other side—Conservative) to pair off with me; and, if he be not going to vote, to get Mr Cotton, who is I suppose against Simeon, to pair off with me.

Browning read his Preface[3] to us last night, full of strange vigour and remarkable in many ways; doubtful whether it can ever be popular.

I am not going as yet to Palgrave's: if I go, it will be on Monday afternoon, but I rather want to come home again as soon as I can, to work at the other "Idylls of the King."

*Nov. 23rd.* I have sent the whole of "The Lover's Tale" to the press, and am to have it back on Thursday. I stop here till Friday morning, when Gifford Palgrave comes with his bride. The agreement (with Strahan) is now all ready for signature. Woolner is out in the country, doing Darwin's bust.

[1] "The Ring and the Book."
[2] Leaving the Moxons.
[3] To "The Ring and the Book.'

*To Sir John Simeon.*

*November 17th*, 1868.

MY DEAR SIR JOHN,

I return you the voting-paper duly signed, whereby you will see that I intend to give you my vote; but, in case the business that brought me to town should unavoidably detain me, I take this occasion to say, that I should think it quite a misfortune for us if you are not again returned as our member.

It is in my opinion no small advantage to the House of Commons to have a Liberal Catholic Christian among them, who may stand up in his place to refute the bigotries both of Roman and Protestant.

I cannot but trust that your well-earned personal popularity will carry you successfully through the present Election, in spite of this invasion of the "*Over-ers*" as we call them in the Island.

Believe me, my dear Sir John,

Yours ever, A. TENNYSON.

*My mother's journal.*

A. went abroad with Mr Locker to Paris, and, when he returned to Farringford, found the following letter from the Rev. Charles Cockin:

24 PARLIAMENT STREET, HULL.
*Nov.* 1868.

SIR,

In reading an old translation of Du Bartas[1] I was struck with the following verse from the "Woodman's Beare," Stanza 55:

[1] The passage quoted is not the work of Du Bartas but of Joshua Sylvester, the translator of Du Bartas, and is in a poem called "The Woodman's Beare," appended to the *Divine Weekes and Workes* of Du Bartas.

"But her slender virgin waste
Made me beare her girdle spight,
Which the same by day imbraste
Though it were cast off at night:
That I wisht, I dare not say,
To be girdle night and day."

May I be pardoned for my curiosity in wishing to know whether these lines suggested the two last stanzas in the song in the "Miller's Daughter"?

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

CHARLES E. COCKIN.

To this he replied:

FARRINGFORD, *Dec. 31st*, 1868.

SIR,

I never saw the lines before: and the coincidence is strange enough, and until I saw the signature I fully believed them to be a hoax.

Yours faithfully, A. TENNYSON.

He wrote to Mr Palgrave about "The Holy Grail":

FARRINGFORD, *24th December*, 1868.

MY DEAR PALGRAVE,

You distress me when you tell me that, without leave given by me, you showed my poem to Max Müller: not that I care about Max Müller's seeing it, but I do care for your not considering it a sacred deposit. Pray do so in future; otherwise I shall see some boy in some Magazine making a lame imitation of it, which a clever boy could do in twenty minutes—and, though his work would be worth nothing, it would take away the bloom and freshness from mine.

I can't conceive how the Grail M. M. mentions can well be treated by a poet of the 13th century from a similar point of view to mine, who write in the 19th, but,

if so, I am rather sorry for it, as I rather piqued myself on my originality of treatment.

If Max Müller will give you or me the name of the book, which contains all the Mediæval literature about the Grail, I will order it of the London Library; though, if it be in German prose, I fear I shan't have the patience to wade thro' a tenth of it.

The "Grail" is not likely to be published for a year or two, and certainly not along with the other thing which you hate so much (too much it seems to me). I shall write three or four more of the "Idylls," and link them together as well as I may. Jowett comes on Saturday, and I will give him your message. The boys are both here and well, not at Farringford which is getting scoured and cleaned, but at a house at Alum Bay (Headon Hall) where Nature, in winter at least, seems always in a rage.

Please attend to my request about the "Grail" and the "Lover's Tale," and show them to no one, or if you can't depend upon yourself, forward them to me.

Always yours,

A. TENNYSON.

Publications 1868:

"The Victim," *Good Words* (January).
"On a Spiteful Letter," *Once a Week* (January)[1].
"Wages," *Macmillan's Magazine* (February).
"1865–66," *Good Words* (March).
"Lucretius," *Macmillan's Magazine* (May).

[1] My father wrote to *Once a Week*, December 24th, 1867: "It is no particular letter that I meant. I have had dozens of them from one quarter or another."

## 1869.

*My mother's journal.—"The Holy Grail," Switzerland.*

*January.* A. read "The Holy Grail" to the Bradleys, explaining the realism and symbolism, and how the natural, if people cared, could always be made to account for the supernatural.

He pointed out the difference between the five visions of the Grail, as seen by the Holy Nun, Sir Galahad, Sir Percivale, Sir Lancelot, Sir Bors, according to their different, their own peculiar natures and circumstances, and the perfection or imperfection of their Christianity. He dwelt on the mystical treatment of every part of his subject, and said the key[1] is to be found in a careful reading of Sir Percivale's vision and subsequent fall and nineteenth century temptations.

*Jan. 15th.* To-day the Moxon connection of 37 years ceased. A. however anonymously still allows the widow (Mrs Moxon) and her daughters a considerable sum a year. We would that the necessity for leaving had not arisen[2].

*Feb. 13th.* A. read what he had done of the birth and marriage of "Arthur."

The agreement with Mr Strahan came for signature. Mr Strahan had offered to publish for A. for nothing, but that A. would not allow. A letter arrived from Mr Gladstone in answer to one about our proposal for increasing the post-office percentage on the small deposits of the poor.

11 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE,
*Feb. 16th*, 1869.

DEAR MRS TENNYSON,

Taxation and all that belongs to it form rather a painful chapter in human affairs. For good nine years and over I had to pore over that chapter night and day. I am now in a measure emancipated from that and inducted into another and

[1] See p. 90.

[2] Virtually through the death of Mr E. Moxon.

more varied servitude. But the best answer I can make to your note is to claim upon the strength of it that you should within no long time give me an opportunity of conversing upon it with you by a visit to or better still a sojourn in London. My kindest remembrances to your husband.

Sincerely yours, W. E. GLADSTONE.

Before the end of February A. had read me all "The Coming of Arthur" finished, and was reading at night Browning's "Ring and the Book"—"Pompilia" and "Caponsacchi" are the finest parts.

Mr Fitzgerald wrote about Mr Browning:

MY DEAR OLD ALFRED,

I have been thinking of you so much for the last two or three days, while the first volume of Browning's *Poems* has been on my table, and I have been trying in vain to read it, and yet the *Athenæum* tells me it is wonderfully fine. And so sometimes I am drawn to write to you (with only one eye, the other scorched by reading with a paraffin lamp these several winters), and, whether you care for my letter or not, you won't care to answer; and yet I want to know what you yourself think of this poem; you, who are the one man able to judge of it, and magnanimous enough to think me capable of seeing what is fine in it. I never could read Browning. If Browning only gave a few pence for the book he drew from, what will posterity give for his version of it, if posterity ever find it on a stall? If Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope and Tennyson survive, what *could* their readers make out of this Browning a hundred years hence? Anything so utterly unlike the *Ring* too which he considers he has wrought out of the old gold—this shapeless thing. "You are unjust, Fitz"—that is what you will say or think, I fancy. I wish you *would* say as much; and also that you are not angry with me for the use I made of your name, which I am rather afraid of. And I don't at all wish to give you any such offence, and never thought, till too late, that you were jealous of such liberties—even in such a local trifle as I took it in. For you have no more loyal follower than

E. F. G.

Who can hardly see.

*May 7th.* A. said "Leodogran's Dream" to me, just made, giving the drift of the whole poem.

*May 18th.* A. read the "San Graal." I doubt whether the "San Graal" would have been written but for my endeavour, and the Queen's wish, and that of the Crown Princess. Thank God for it. He has had the subject on his mind for years, ever since he began to write about Arthur and his knights.

*May 25th.* Mr and Mrs Fields and Miss Lowell (daughter of James Russell Lowell) came. A. took them to the Needles. Miss Lowell said that her grandmother, Mrs Spence, used to shut her shutters and put crape on her knocker every 4th of July. Her grandfather was even banished for his love of England. A. assured her that he would drink a "cup of wine" to her grandmother's memory. Miss Lowell saw her first cowslips here. Very pleasant guests.

*June 14th.* A. left Folkestone with Mr Locker for Munich and Switzerland. Mr Eardly joined them. Before starting, A. had written to Mr Locker: "We will go by the Brussels route: we might possibly be detained at Paris, which seems ready to break out into fire."

## *Notes made by A. in Switzerland.*

"The last cloud clinging to the peak when all the mists have risen." "Snow and rock thro' cloud unbelievably high." "The top of the Jungfrau rich saffron colour at dawn, the faded moon beside it." "The vision over the valley of Schwarenbach." "Splendour of sunlit clouds passing over the shadowed peak of the Eiger."

# CHAPTER III.

## TOUR IN SWITZERLAND (1869); ALSO SOME OPINIONS ON POETRY.

Mr Frederick Locker-Lampson kindly gave me the following account of his travels with my father:

I am proud to have won the friendship of Alfred Tennyson, "quella fonte che spande di parlar si largo fiume." I first met him in Publisher Moxon's Dover Street parlour. Shortly afterwards, I think about 1864 or 1865, I stayed with him at Grayshott Hall, near Haslemere. We were cordial, we soon became intimate. I rejoice to think we have always remained so. I have often visited Tennyson at Farringford and at Aldworth, and not seldom he has been my guest. We have not met so constantly of late years. Before Hallam and Lionel Tennyson grew up, I used to see a good deal of him in London, for to be near us at 91 Victoria Street he secured a pied-à-terre in Albert Mansions opposite. It was from there that we sallied forth together to see many of his old friends, among others Carlyle, Froude and Mr Gladstone, and we often took morning walks in the Parks and Kensington Gardens.

Tennyson and I have made two successful little tours together, to Paris in December 1868, and through France to Switzerland in June and July, 1869. We also met at St Moritz in 1873. I found him an exceedingly amiable and most interesting travelling companion.

It was thus that the first tour came about.

Tennyson had not been out of England for eight years or more, and we agreed that it would be very pleasant to go abroad together, if only for a week; so without more ado, we arranged that on the coming Saturday, the 28th November, he should

pick me up at 91 Victoria Street, that we should catch the 4.30 p.m. train at Victoria Station (you see we were precise), and that we should sleep at Dover.

At four o'clock on the day appointed, when I was sitting ready packed and expectant, a message arrived that Tennyson's cold was so severe he could not possibly start, and further that he was to be heard of at Mr Knowles'. I swallowed my disappointment, went to church next day, forgave Tennyson his cold, and on the Monday drove down to Clapham.

It was then and there that we solemnly agreed to set off on Wednesday, the 2nd December, which we actually did.

Shortly after quitting the wind-swept cliffs of Dover, as we were looking down on the tumbling waves, and enjoying the salt smell and keen spray that flew up towards the bows of the steamer, Tennyson said: "They are swift, glittering deeps, sharp like the back fin of a fish," and so they were.

We took life easily in Paris, went to the Louvre, especially to see the Venus of Milo and a Demosthenes seated; then there was a little picture by Nicolas Poussin, which Tennyson on the journey had spoken of with pleasure. The subject was the death of Narcissus, Echo slightly in the background, fading slowly away, and Cupid holding a torch. Tennyson said: "Standing over the dead body he looks like a little god of the world." He gazed at this picture with delight, but I confess I saw little to admire; the colour was disappointing,—indeed I did not consider it a typical specimen of the learned Frenchman.

We again saw this Poussin in 1869. I venture to think that Tennyson's vivid imagination had something to do with his admiration.

We strolled on the Boulevards, we visited the churches, museums and markets, and we went to the theatres; one representation must have been very popular, for we could only get places in a shallow little box, a mere ledge, at the very top of the house, almost touching the ceiling, and cheek-by-jowl with an enormous gas chandelier; it was a beetling precipice; what with the dizzy height, our short sight and the glare, we could distinguish nothing. The stage seemed in shadow, and Tennyson turning to me said gloomily, and I did not want to differ from him, "Locker, this is like being stuck on a spike over Hell." Altogether we got a good deal of discomfiture for our money.

We also paid a visit to the Couvent des Oiseaux; the Sœur Louise Marie was an old friend of the Tennysons, and we saw her under interesting circumstances.

We dined with my old friends Mons. and Madame Mohl, in the Rue du Bac, also at the Maison Dorée, when Mr and Mrs Charles Perkins, of Boston, old Roman friends, were our guests. I think all I have said up to this point took place during our first visit to Paris; what follows will refer to the second.

Tennyson was an excellent travelling companion; he endured, good-humouredly endured, many annoyances, some of them irritating enough, and which I might relate, if the doing so would not be making myself and my companion somewhat ridiculous. I will here jot down any disjointed scraps of our talk, or aught else that occurs to me.

We know that Tennyson's power of expressing himself in his writings is remarkable, and it is equally so in his conversation; he always, and without effort, uses the most felicitous epithets; they light up his sentences and are never pedantic.

Dear reader, while reading these cheerful notes, you must always please to remember that my many-sided travelling companion was a humourist.

Mürren, 19*th June*. We were looking towards the higher Alps, and Tennyson said that perhaps this earth and all that is on it—storms, mountains, cataracts, the sun and the skies—are the Almighty: in fact, that such is our petty nature, we cannot see Him, but we see His shadow, as it were, a distorted shadow: he added that possibly, at that moment, there might be beings invisible to us, who see the Almighty more clearly than we do, and he illustrated his meaning by saying that we have five senses, but that if we had been born with only one of these, our ideas of Nature would have been very different, much more limited.

Tennyson went on to say that supposing there were creatures who instead of having five senses had five hundred, how far they would be in advance of anything we could conceive of! that a worm or an oyster, as compared with ourselves, had a very limited mental vision, and he added how very small the earth must appear to worms and oysters!

I think Tennyson justly recognised the bounds of our knowledge. He said that "whatever is the object of Faith

cannot be the object of Reason. In fine, Faith must be our guide,—*that* Faith which we believe comes to us from a Divine Source."

We talked of the Materialists. "After all," said he, "what is matter?" He added, "I think it is merely the shadow of something greater than itself, and which we poor shortsighted creatures cannot see. If the rationalists are in the right, what is the meaning of all the mosques and temples and cathedrals, spread and spreading over the face of the earth? They will not easily beat the character of our Lord, that union of man and woman, sweetness and strength."

He spoke with great regard of X—, then he added: "I think that I believe more of revealed religion than X— does. He believes in a God, but knows nothing more." I said: "I wonder if he is happy." He replied: "So good a man must be happy." Then he added: "I am not blasé, I see the nothingness of life, I know its emptiness, but I believe in Love, and Virtue, and Duty. Perhaps, thanks to Byron, I was more blasé at fourteen than I am now."

We talked of Byron and Wordsworth. "Of course," said Tennyson, "Byron's merits are on the surface. This is not the case with Wordsworth. You must love Wordsworth ere he will seem worthy of your love. As a boy I was an enormous admirer of Byron, so much so that I got a surfeit of him, and now I cannot read him as I should like to do. I was fourteen when I heard of his death. It seemed an awful calamity; I remember I rushed out of doors, sat down by myself, shouted aloud, and wrote on the sandstone: '*Byron is dead!*'"

He said that as a boy he had "delighted in Pope's *Homer*," but he added, though "Pope is a consummate artist, in the lower sense of the term," he could not now read him. I suppose he meant "lower" as compared with the supreme power and sublime music of *Paradise Lost*, about which I have often heard him quote *Polixenes* in *The Winter's Tale:*

> "This is an art
> Which does mend nature, change it rather, but
> The art itself is nature."

Tennyson went on to say that there was a great wind of words in a good deal of Shelley, but that as a writer of blank

verse he was perhaps the most skilful of the moderns[1]. He said: "Nobody admires Shelley more than I once did, and I still admire him. I think I like his 'Epipsychidion' as much as anything by him." He said that Keats had "a keen physical imagination; if he had been here (at Mürren) he would, in one line, have given us a picture of that mountain." (The Mönch, etc. opposite.)

We often talked of Wordsworth. I remember his saying something to this effect: "You must not think because I speak plainly of Wordsworth's defects as a poet that I have not a very high admiration of him. I shall never forget my deep emotion the first time I had speech with him. I have a profound admiration for 'Tintern Abbey.'" And yet even in that poem he considered the old poet had shown a want of literary instinct, or whatever it may be called. He thought it too long. He pointed out that the word "again" occurs four times in the first fourteen lines, that the sixth and seventh lines might have been more terse. "Something like this," said he, extemporising on the spur of the moment:

That makes a lone place lonelier.

He pencilled these and some other remarks in my volume of Wordsworth. Of course he greatly praised the famous line "Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns"—"the permanent in the transitory";—he ended by saying, and saying emphatically, that, putting aside a great deal that Wordsworth had written which was not by any means first rate, he thought that "Wordsworth's very best is the best in its way that has been sent out by the moderns." I think that those were his exact words. I understood him to mean since Milton.

I spoke with admiration of his "Ulysses"; he said, "Yes, there is an echo of Dante in it." He gave "Tithonus" the same position as "Ulysses." He said that if Arthur Hallam had lived he would have been "one of the foremost men of his time, *but not as a poet.*"

He talked of "The Princess" with something of regret, of its fine blank verse, and the many good things in it: "but," said

[1] At the same time my father always spoke of "Wordsworth's best blank verse as being on the whole the finest since Milton."

he, "though truly original, it is, after all, only a medley." He added that it was very difficult in blank verse to give descriptions, such as "So that sport * * * the patron with his curls," and at the same time to retain poetical elevation. Tennyson insisted that the employment of rhyme would have made it much easier. He went on to say that Wordsworth attempted this sort of thing in "The Excursion," but not successfully; for instance, "And sitting on the grass partook The fragrant beverage drawn from China's herb." "Why could he not have said 'And sitting on the grass had tea'? There is no doubt that Wordsworth injured fine passages by the introduction of flat and essentially prosaic phrases, such as 'for several hours,' which occurs in his Prelude in the description of the Simplon."

My first sight of Tom Moore was at the Athenæum Club, where, as a boy, I had been taken by my father; we were talking to Lord Monteagle, when a very little man, eyeglass in hand, entered the room for an instant, raised himself on the tips of his toes, and glanced around, presumably to see if some person he was in quest of were there, and my father said to me, "That's Tom Moore, the poet." He pronounced it *More*. I told all this to Tennyson, and he said he had first seen Moore at Mr Rogers' and that "he had a George the Fourth look." Then I hazarded the remark that Rogers' best short poems were as good as Moore's. "No," said Tennyson, "Rogers is not as good as Moore. Moore had a wilder fancy, but still hardly anything that Moore wrote is altogether what it should be." He gave as an instance: "She is far from the land where her young hero sleeps." He also quoted with mingled merriment and contempt a passage or two of Little's poems, and said "How fat that is!" meaning how material, and how fleshly. He did this with remarkable finesse of expression. Tennyson exceedingly admired "Oft in the stilly night." I suggested that Byron's "Isles of Greece" might have been admitted into the *Golden Treasury:* he also thought so, but he supposed that the editor had discovered some defect in it, of which he (Tennyson) was not aware—but he had not read it for years. He then repeated the first stanza, and said, "That's very fine, but Thackeray tells me that Samian wine is very wretched stuff."

We talked of Rogers, and of 22 St James' Place. I told him that one morning my father had taken me, when quite a boy,

to see the poet-wit: he was an ugly little man, a wrinkled Mæcenas, in a brown coat. Henry Luttrell happened to be there, also in a brown coat. He was also little and ugly, and as my father had a little brown coat too, I suppose there were three of them. Rogers was calm and kind; he showed me a china coffee cup which had belonged to General Washington, who he knew had been a friend of my maternal grandfather. Neither then nor afterwards did I detect in him any of that quiet venom which his particular friends seemed so anxious to discover in him.

All this talk interested Tennyson; he said: "When I first knew Rogers, he more than once asked me to go and see him; for a long time I refused, but at last I went, and was fully repaid. I knew him well, and often breakfasted with him, and spent long half days in his society." He said he was once walking down Bond Street with Rogers, and they met a hearse, and Rogers said, in his very quiet, deliberate and slightly sardonic tones: "You know they call me a *tête morte;* the other day I was walking out of St James' Place, and I saw three hearses turning in there, and I said to myself, 'perhaps these hearses are coming for *me*,' and I kept out of the way for the whole day, and when I returned at night, I found that St James' Place had been full of hearses—a trick of that rascal Theodore Hook's."

Tennyson went on to say that perhaps some of Rogers' shorter poems would last longer than the ambitious efforts of more important writers. Rogers used often to read to him passages of his writings, and to consult him about the notes to his *Italy*. "He liked me," Tennyson said, "and thought that perhaps I might be the coming poet, and might help to hand his name down to future ages. One day we were walking arm in arm, and I spoke of what is called Immortality and remarked how few writers could be sure of it. Upon this, Rogers squeezed my arm and said: 'I am sure of it.'" Tennyson was fond of Rogers and told me this with no unamiable intention, but, on the contrary, in all kindliness and good faith. Most poets have felt at times as Rogers felt on this occasion, but with this difference, that they had not an Immortal's arm to squeeze.

After these conversations, he would often end with "Rogers was a kindly old man, excepting when he was bilious"; now, the same might have been said of Bede, the Venerable Saint.

Tennyson was greatly impressed by the deadly-earnest and savagery, and let me say *sadness*, of Swift's *Legion Club*. He has more than once read it to me; on the last occasion, Houghton and George Venables, two great friends (than whom none were more warmly regarded by the circle that met fitfully at Farringford and Aldworth), were present, and they were also impressed by it.

Tennyson admired Samuel Johnson's grave earnestness, and said that certain of his couplets, for these qualities and for their "high moral tone," were not surpassed in English satire. However, he ventured to make merry over:

> "Let observation, with extensive view,
> Survey mankind, from China to Peru."

"Why did he not say 'Let observation, with extended observation, observe extensively'?"

He spoke of Mr Ruskin and the *Pathetic Fallacy*. He thought Wordsworth was justified in saying that "The moon looked round her with delight when the heavens were bare," but that the late Alexander Smith, "a poet of considerable promise," went too far when he spoke of "the wave, a bride wooing the shore." He said the same of Kingsley, that "the cruel, crawling wave" was too much like a live creature.

Tennyson liked Jonson's "It is not growing like a tree," and Marvell's "To a Prude," "but," he added, "I can't read Ben Jonson, especially his comedies. To me he appears to move in a wide sea of glue." I said, "Do you like Goldsmith's 'When lovely woman stoops to folly'?" And he replied: "I love it." He also greatly praised the *Vicar of Wakefield*.

He told me that he was moved to write "Tears, idle Tears" at Tintern Abbey; and that it was not real woe, as some people might suppose; "it was rather the yearning that young people occasionally experience for that which seems to have passed away from them for ever." That in him it was strongest when he was quite a youth. He said, "Old Carlyle, who is never moved by poetry, once quoted those lines of mine, while we were out walking." Carlyle had written to him in praise of "Ulysses," and to his regret he had lost the letter[1]. He valued Carlyle's opinion.

Tennyson said that the "Bugle Song" was written at

[1] See Vol. I. p. 213.

Killarney, and "O Swallow, Swallow," was first composed in rhyme. He had been told that

Come down, O Maid, from yonder mountain height—

to Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees,

was as felicitous as Theocritus.

He spoke of "The Brook," and the pauses in that passage "'Run Katie!' Katie never ran * * * blushing for a boon," and of the whole spirit of the poem, as not having been appreciated; and he said the same of some of his similes, such as in "Vivien" the blood of Merlin likened to an opal, and in "Enid" the serpent compared to a worm dragging the leaf under the soil.

Tennyson spoke to me several times, almost with horror, of the way people who have won fame are likely to be maligned after their death. I have an old commonplace book, into which, with many other scraps of prose and verse, I had copied an epigram by Thomas Hood. It runs as follows:

A joke. "What is a modern poet's fate?
To write his thoughts upon a slate;
The critic spits on what is done,
*Gives it a wipe*—and all is gone."

T. HOOD.

This quatrain amused Tennyson, and he said: "It is a good joke, and now I'll write you a grave *truth*." Which he did as follows, adding the words "a joke" by the side of Hood's lines.

A truth. While I live, the owls!
When I die, the GHOULS!!!

In his dedication of the "Idylls" to the Prince Consort at line 15, after the words, "We know him now: all narrow jealousies," he originally had said:

The fume and babble of a petulant hour.

He left out this line when the passage was published. I have many such notes by him.

In the first issue of "The Princess," edition 1875, King & Co., vol. IV. p. 120, line 8 runs thus:

And followed by a hundred *h*airy does.

Was not this unkind of the printer? I was with the unlucky author when the proof reached him. He gazed at it with horror and gave a very prolonged and remarkable groan, which not having been set to music, I cannot do justice to here.

It was exceedingly sultry at the falls of Schaffhausen. These were very impressive, but to escape the sun we were glad to take refuge in a shed pervaded by an atrocious odour of decayed cheeses, or some such horror. "This is my usual luck," says Tennyson, "I never go to see anything which is very impressive, without encountering something mean or repulsive. Now, this sublime cataract, and this disgusting stench, will for ever dwell together in my memory." He went on to say that the unpleasant odours of London were as offensive as those of Paris, but that the latter were more pungent, piercing like the point of a lance; and then he added with grave emphasis, "It is an age of lies, and also an age of stinks."

Grindelwald, Aigle, *26th June*[1]. To-day we bought two large carved wood bears, for which, after breaking a good deal of French over the dealer, we agreed that Tennyson should pay one hundred francs. These bears are now in the entrance hall at Aldworth, keeping watch and ward, quite ready to welcome the arriving guest with a friendly hug.

In the evening we played battledore and shuttlecock in the pension attached to the *Aigle*. He said that he had once kept up two thousand. This *Aigle* is a huge hungry-looking caravansary, with curiously uncomfortable beds. Tennyson's, especially, had none of the caressing and consenting softness of that to which he had been accustomed; suggestive of anything but sleep, it was hard and lumpy, and of the pronounced German type—the kind of bed that Gray, the poet, must have had in his mind's eye when he said:

"That hush'd in grim repose, expects its ev'ning prey."

[1] F. Locker-Lampson wrote to F. T. Palgrave, June 24th, 1869: "I think A. T. is happy and quite well. He walks excellently, and is ready for a walk now (2 o'clock), having been at it since 8 A.M."

Just now the *Aigle* would be entirely deserted, but for ourselves and a young, lately-married and superlatively happy couple. This pair much interest my poet. We sit opposite to them at breakfast and again at dinner, at the extreme end of a vast expanse of bare, cold tablecloth. They nestle close to each other like love-birds on one perch, that perch being a short one. She is a bouncing *blonde*, frankly blue in her eyes, and there is a coquetry, uncalculated or calculated, in her dimples, her boots and her parasol; she has also an exasperating little hat and feather. Sad to say, none of these allurements seem lost on my gifted companion. As often as she addresses her swain, she gazes with innocent rapture into his mild eyes, and every now and again, as if asserting her right of possession, with sympathetic fingers arranges and re-arranges the bow of his cravat, and then sends a pretty appealing glance across the table in our direction. These lovers take pastoral walks together, and are often to be met in twilight intervals, steeped in honeymoon-shine. On such occasions they deem it expedient to affect an exquisite confusion.

Excepting for this, and you will allow this is a large exception, our lovers may not be specially attractive, but surely they are beautiful in their *abandon*, loving and being loved. Thanks to them the prosaic *Aigle* is an Arcadian hostelry, with green retreats and winding paths of dalliance, lawns, rocks and leafy trees.

> Was there a tree that did not know
> The love betwixt those two?

The glacier nearest to the hotel is much discoloured by the *débris* from the mountain. Tennyson's farewell words were: "That glacier is a filthy thing; it looks as if a thousand London seasons had passed over it." Such was our retrospect of Grindelwald.

1*st July*. To-day at Giessbach he said that if he had been one of the "Wise Men of Greece," and had been asked for a *dictum*, he would have given "Every man imputes himself," meaning that a man, unless he is very sane indeed, in judging of others, imputes motives, etc. which move himself. "No man can see further than his moral eyes will allow him."

He has been talking of Lord Bacon. He says that certain passages of his writings, their pregnant eloquence and vivid

completeness, lifted him more than those of almost any writer. We happened to see a little fountain in the hotel, which danced a wisp; he stopped, looked at it attentively, and said: "It is a pretty toy, it would have pleased Bacon."

Lucerne, *2nd July*. To-day we hired a boat and two men, and had a row on the lake. As we returned, the wind rose, the men pulled well, but they tired, so Tennyson bent to an oar. He rowed very pluckily for half-an-hour, till Mr Eardly our travelling companion relieved him. Then came my turn. When we got back to the hotel, the people said that the wind had risen so much that they had been watching us with anxiety.

A few days before, on the Wengern Alp, we came across a man who blew a loud blast through a cow's horn, which produced a varied and prodigiously prolonged echo. Tennyson said: "You'll have to pay half a franc for that noise. The man subsists on a ghost of a sound."

Hôtel d'Angleterre, Strasbourg, *3rd July*. Tennyson does not like his eggs too lightly cooked. To-day at breakfast there was a pretty waitress, and he sent his eggs to be more boiled, and then, in the damsel's native tongue, expostulated with her as to the softness of her eggs and the apparent hardness of her heart. It was very pleasant to hear his grave but gallant remonstrance and her merry laugh. He is delightful.

Rheims, *5th July*. We have just returned from visiting the Cathedral and the Church of St Remi (one of the most remarkable churches in Europe). As we passed through the immense wide-open door of the cathedral, which seemed to spread its arms to receive all who wished to enter, Tennyson said: "How grand it must have been, when the lower windows were all filled with stained glass, to have looked into the divine twilight, and gazed up at that huge window, glowing like jewels sprinkled in gloom! What a mystery is the Christian religion! It requires an act of Faith to believe and accept it."

We arrived in Paris on 7th July. On the 10th we breakfasted with Gustave Doré, the painter, at the Moulin Rouge. His enormous studio was in the Rue St Dominic. We were much pleased with the good Doré. Although Tennyson had not been entirely satisfied with the publication of the folio edition of the "Idylls," which Doré illustrated, the two met and parted with perfect cordiality.

One afternoon I was packing Tennyson's portmanteau,

packing for both of us, as he was suffering from gout. The weather was so hot that we had taken off our coats, he, the while, being seated on the edge of his bed, smoking his pipe.

As the packing was almost completed, and it was near the hour of departure, I cleverly hoisted him into his coat, and bade him be easy; however, he complained that the garment was tight, and that he would rather wear his other coat, his older and bigger coat. He would much prefer his bigger one. As the time was getting on, and as I did not covet the labour of unpacking and repacking, I insisted that the coat he already had on did as well as possible, infinitely better than the older one.

"Now, be aisy," says I, "or if you can't be aisy, be as aisy as you can."

This quenched my poet; he returned to his pipe. He was plaintive, but he submitted. When I had quite finished and looked round for my own coat, I found that I had not only packed up both of Tennyson's, but that I had squeezed him into mine, my comparatively little coat. At last when my blunder was set right and when all was comfortably arranged, the dear fellow volunteered something very kind about the trouble I took for him. I assured him it was no trouble, quite the contrary. He was silent for a while and then he said: "Locker, I think you have a physical pleasure in packing."

*Later in London.* This morning we were at the marriage of Miss Louisa Simeon to Mr Richard Ward. She was the daughter of our old friend, Sir John Simeon, one of the best beloved by Tennyson and me of all Tennyson's circle. The youngest of the bridesmaids was a five-years-old sister, and as she knelt before us in sweet unconscious reverence, she displayed the soles of her little white shoes. These, and her little face and her general adornment were altogether very engaging, and Tennyson whispered to me: "She and her shoes remind me of one of your poems."

I once met Tennyson at dinner at the Conservative Club, in company with Dicky Doyle, Sir J. Emerson Tennent, Sir Arthur Buller (Charles Buller's brother) and others whom I have forgotten. Tennyson read "Maud" to us and was very gay and companionable.

After dinner one or two of the younger spirits got round him, and pelted him with all sorts of questions, some highly

indiscreet, all of which he listened to most benignantly; at last our host, Mr Cholmondeley Pennell, cut in with: "Mr Tennyson, which do you consider the greatest poet, Browning or Blank?" On this Tennyson withdrew his pipe from his lips, straightened himself in his chair, and said emphatically: "Blank, as compared with Browning, is as the dung beneath my feet." He afterwards expressed regret that he had spoken so freely. You see, dear reader, that in telling this story, I have not betrayed my friend.

In 1870, my distinguished friend, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, expressed a warm and very laudable desire to make Tennyson's acquaintance. At that time the Laureate was confined with gout to his room, on a fourth floor in Albert Mansions, and the gartered statesman, often a martyr to the same malady, was a good deal past eighty. However, Lord Stratford was not only a hero, but he was also a hero-worshipper, and, like his great kinsman, was no mean poet; so he gallantly and gaily breasted the staircase. The introduction was happily accomplished, the visit satisfactorily paid, and I thought that the bearing of these two remarkable and very striking-looking men was worthy of their high reputations, and that it was characteristic of both.

I do not think anything specially to be remembered was said, unless when Lord Stratford described being at Lords' Cricket Club, I suppose the Dorset Square ground, and seeing a big Harrow boy, bat in hand, limp back to the pavilion having just lost his wicket, and evidently not over-pleased. This moody-looking boy was Lord Byron.

Lord Stratford added that he afterwards met Lord Byron at John Murray's, and then at Constantinople, and that on each occasion Byron talked a great deal, and very brightly, but that a mocking spirit ran through his conversation. However, he did not appear to have said anything that had impressed Lord Stratford, or lingered in his memory. "Byron had a fine head, eyes and hair, but the expression of the lower part of his face was not agreeable." Perhaps Lord Byron, on the sneering side of his nature, was not the sort of man to greatly interest Lord Stratford.

Tennyson says that as a boy he had a great thirst to be a poet, and to be a *popular* poet. He would rove through the fields composing hundreds of couplets, and shouting them to the skies; but that now he is inclined to think popularity is a

bastard fame, which sometimes goes with the more real thing, but is independent of and somewhat antagonistic to it. He appears to shrink from his own popularity. He maintains that the artist should spare no pains, that he should do his very best for the sake of his art, and for *that* only.

Balzac's remark that "Dans tout l'homme de génie il y a un enfant" may find its illustration in Tennyson. He is the only grown up human being that I know of, who habitually thinks aloud. His humour is of the dryest, it is admirable. Did anybody ever make one laugh more heartily than Alfred Tennyson? He tells a story excellently, and has a catching laugh. There are people who laugh because they are shy or disconcerted, or for lack of ideas, or to bridge over some conversational gap or obstruction: only a few because they are happy or amused or perhaps triumphant. Tennyson has an entirely natural and a very kindly laugh.

I and mine have a warm regard for Tennyson. He has been very kind to Mrs Locker and me. The more we see of him the more we appreciate his singular charm, which has never deserted him in this world, and which I trust will be secured to him in the next. His friendship has been and still is one of the solaces of my life.

It is easy to criticize a great man, it is not so easy to estimate him, and certainly it is not for me to attempt it; however, I may say that Tennyson, as a poet, has mental and moral gifts, most rare in the high quality of their separate excellence, and marvellous in the harmony of their combination. "The Muse may give thee, but the gods must guide," and this the gods have done. So future generations will not suffer his happiest poems, and there are many such, to die. These poems will remain the highest expression of the imaginative mind of his epoch, and he will continue to shine, a beautiful and serene star, in the poetical heavens.

On again reading this paper of mine, I am painfully conscious of its inadequacy. Lady Tennyson's name is not even mentioned, but there is little need. Is not there a Book where all noble actions are recorded? I spare her my praise.

*My mother's journal.—Mr Fox, Aldworth, Arthur Hallam, Miss Thackeray.*

After the journey, Mr Locker gave us a drawing by Guercino, and a print by Marc Antonio of Mary standing over the dead body of Christ.

A. wrote to Mr Locker:

ALDWORTH, *August 6th*, 1869.

MY DEAR LOCKER,

I am rather shocked at receiving your magnificent M. Antonio and Guercino: I feel myself (as compared with you, who know so much more of these matters) unworthy to be the possessor, at least blameworthy in accepting them. Nevertheless I do accept them, and value them not only as they are beautiful, but as memorials of your friendship.

We have got into our new house, which is very charming; nothing in it pleases me more than the bath, a perennial stream which falls thro' the house, and where I take three baths a day.

I hope presently, when we get things a little arranged, you will come and see us.

Yours ever, A. TENNYSON.

And to the Duke of Argyll:

ALDWORTH, *Aug. 17th*, 1869.

MY DEAR DUKE,

I apologise in the first place for troubling you with this letter rather than Gladstone, but I wrote to him lately in behalf of another petitioner, and am loth to intrude on him again so soon: moreover I thought that, being yourself a geologist, you were more likely to be interested in the writer of the letter. However that may be, Mr Fox is a very worthy man, and poor, and has

been for many years curate at Brixton near me in the Isle of Wight, whose whole delight, always and excepting that which he takes in the discharge of his clerical duties, lies in exploring on our coast; and it would break his heart I believe to be separated from the localities of his favourite study. If the government would give him this living, they would make him happy for life: for the worth and value of his contributions to geology, Owen will answer.

I will say no more, and what I have said comes I fear too late: for I have been living here in my new house near Haslemere, to which as yet there is no post, and all my letters arrive irregularly, and so his was delayed in reaching me: still, if the living be not already promised, I should be grateful if you could help him to it.

I do not know where you are at present, but I direct this to Inveraray.

With best remembrances to your Duchess,

Believe me always yours,

A. TENNYSON.

*Sept. 13th.* At night a fearful clap of thunder. We seemed in the very heart of the storm. A. said he did not think that he had "ever seen anything more sublime than the great plain of Sussex beneath us, covered with moving mist, in the dim twilight, and bellowing from end to end with thunder:

> With sullen thunders to and fro
> That to a dreary distance go."

Read the "Idylls" thro' in their proper sequence during these months, also Tom Hughes' *Alfred the Great*, Pressensé's *Life of Christ*, Martineau's *Endeavours after a Christian Life*, and Lecky's *European Morals*.

*Oct. 7th.* We laid the first turf of our (Aldworth) lawn. All the turf is brought from our Farringford Down.

He gave me his beginning of "Beaumains" ("Sir Gareth")

to read, written (as was said jokingly) to "describe a pattern youth for his boys."

He "would like the blank shields on his mantelpiece to be emblazoned with devices to represent the great modern poets, Dante, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe, Wordsworth."

*Nov. 1st.* A. and I talked a long talk together, sitting over the fire in our room at night. We were very busy about the new volume of poems, "The Holy Grail."

Dr Martineau came. He struck us as having a subtle and wonderful mind: he is mournful and tender-looking, "a noble gentleman."

A. went to London. Tilly (Matilda Tennyson) in the evening told me how, on an autumn evening at Somersby, just before Arthur Hallam's death, she and her sister Mary saw a tall figure, clothed from head to foot in white, and they followed it down the lane, and saw it pass thro' the hedge where there was no gap: and how she was so awed that on reaching home she burst into tears. She then related how, being at Spilsby for her dancing lessons, she had brought home the letters, and one among them from Clevedon. This was addressed to A. She gave it to him, as he sat at dinner, and went to take off her bonnet, and she heard afterwards that he had suddenly left the table, and that poor Emily was then summoned to him to have the terrible news broken to her.

Then Tilly talked of Arthur Hallam's goodness to the younger children; how she and they "roared" when he went away with A. and Charlie to college; and said that Arthur Hallam was so delightful, that they were all in love with him from the first, when they saw him on the lawn, where he and A. were playing with "Billy," the monkey. She added that he always begged that the children might be of any pleasure-party that was made: but that A. was kindest of all to the children, often taking them on his knee, and telling them ghost-stories and other stories of his own invention.

A. wrote to me that he thought of giving up "The Lover's Tale," and publishing "The Golden Supper" with a preface.

*Dec. 11th.* Farringford. A. read me some of Maurice's *Social Morals;* "a noble book" it seemed to me, as A. called it. He wrote to Z. expressing the hope that Cabinet Ministers would think how to make England and her colonies one, body and soul, instead of casting the colonies off: and he continued—

"I cannot but feel that those who think otherwise must be blind to our real interest, and our high calling."

Throughout these years we saw a great deal of Mr and Mrs Cameron, who had bought a house near Freshwater Bay. My father described him as "a philosopher with his beard dipt in moonlight." Not only was he an excellent classical scholar, but while in the East, where he lived for many years, he had codified the laws of Ceylon. Mrs Cameron was one of the most benevolent of human beings, always thinking of something for the good or pleasure of others. Her photographs are well-known. She herself took an absorbing interest in making them.

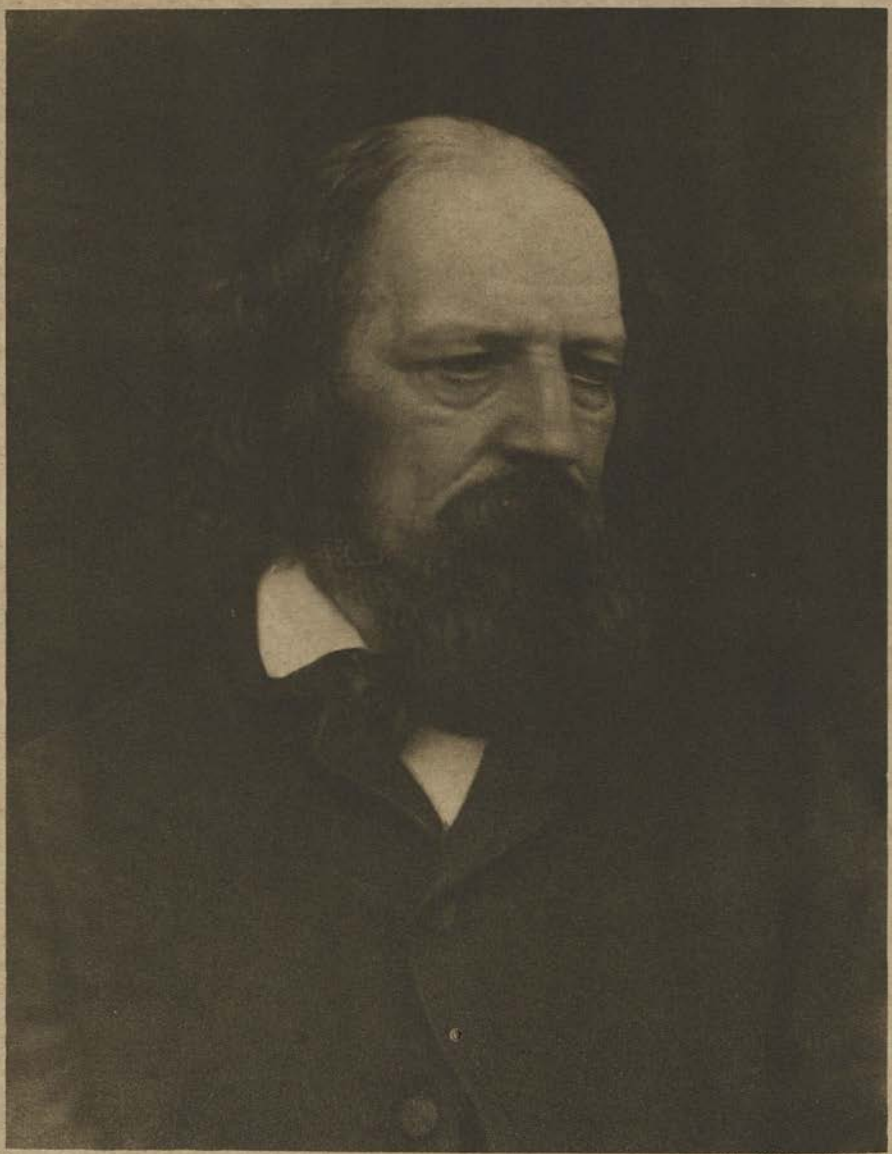
Writing to Mr Digby, she gives an account of the life at Freshwater[1].

After speaking of the party of young people assembled at Freshwater; of Annie Thackeray as the queen of all hearts, of her cousins the Miss Ritchies, like Gainsboroughs to look at, one sister "singing perfectly, the other playing as perfectly," both as if inspired; and after telling of the dances and the walks, "Alfred taking walks of several miles daily," and of the silent and deep enjoyment of Henry Taylor, "my peculiar friend,"—Mrs Cameron adds: "Then we have feasts of intellect. Sometimes we dine at Farringford, sometimes Farringford dines here."

One evening she describes, when Annie Thackeray, and the Miss Prinseps, Alfred Tennyson, and Henry Taylor, were dining at her house. "We dined at 7 and only got up from dinner at 11. All this while the most brilliant conversation. The whole range of poetry comprised, every immortal poet brought to life, and living again in the glowing and wise breath of Alfred Tennyson, in the quotations from Henry Taylor's rich and faithful memory. Each one recited favourite passages from Beaumont and Fletcher, favourite sonnets of Shakespeare's, all that was finest in my adored Wordsworth, and the god of poetic fire, Milton. They were like two brilliant fencers crossing their rapiers, or flashing their foils, giving and evading clean thrusts[1]."

From 1869 to 1880 my brother, myself and the younger members of the Cameron family spent many of

[1] See Appendix, p. 523, for Freshwater Society.



Walker & Boutall, Ph. Sc.

*Alfred Tennyson,*

*from the Photograph made in 1867*

*by Mrs Julia Margaret Cameron.*

our evenings during the Christmas and Easter holidays in Mrs Cameron's little theatre. Here we acted plays by Sheridan, Gilbert, Robertson and Tom Taylor, and my father was seldom absent, for he loved the stage. He was a careful critic and never missed a point. As one of the actors said of him: "Criticism only came when sought, and seldom then; but, if conceded at all, he had the faculty of putting in a few forcible phrases the warmth of his approval, or the *douche* of his disapproval, as I never heard them put."

Miss Emily Ritchie writes of her first visit at this time:

The first day (in 1869) I ever saw Alfred Tennyson he was walking on the downs at Freshwater. Annie Thackeray was with him and she introduced me and made me walk on his other side.

He swooped down the hillside, his large black cloak flying in the wind, and his massive tread seeming to carry him at an astonishing pace. After that, a large party of us led by Mrs Cameron spent the evening at Farringford; the fact of being in so august a presence seems to have obliterated the actual memory of what he said; but I remember how, in the course of the evening, a sudden transformation took place in all our appearances, which gave us assurance from an unexpected quarter. One of the subjects which came up in the course of conversation was the fashion for young ladies of wearing their hair. He said the most becoming fashion was to wear it flowing, without being put up at all, and wished that we would let ours hang down our backs. He suggested our trying the effect at once.

We all therefore sat round the dessert table with our hair down, and for the rest of the evening he approved of us very much, and said he wished the Empress Eugénie would set the fashion.

What he especially disliked was seeing the whole ear, as "So few women have specially small, well-shaped ears to show."

Some time after this I spent three nights at Farringford, and

on one of them a dance took place at Mrs Cameron's, to which I went, and my return from it was memorable. It was two in the morning, and I came back expecting to be let in by the manservant, but it was he himself who opened the door, and the invitation to come up to his den, where he was still smoking, took me aback. He led me up the winding stairs to his study (a much smaller and less stately one than the present study), and talked delightfully whilst he finished his pipe. What I chiefly remember was the way in which he told me "never to get spoilt by the world."

His talk ranged over every possible subject, from the most trivial thing of the passing moment, to which he somehow gave raciness and importance, to the greatest heights of thought and speculation. The unexpected was one of the most striking fascinations of his company, the utter child-like simplicity of his great nature revealed itself in this.

His judgments of men were wonderfully kindly. He had a refreshing hatred of the commonplaces of intercourse, and a mistrust of what he called the "humbug of society," which made him dread ever attending anything in the shape of a party: but to visitors in his own house he showed ideal hospitality, giving his friends a feeling that they had come to a home indeed, bestowing *himself* upon them in a way which the most genial of the earth alone understand.

He used the fewest words I ever heard anyone use to express his ideas, or to recount an experience, or to tell an anecdote (always a large element in his talk), but each word was the right one, and his use of the English language was unlike anybody else's for force and dignity.

The strongest vein of common sense characterised his talk, and he disliked exaggeration of all sorts.

Mrs Cameron's wildly romantic ideas and performances used to call forth growls of amused dissatisfaction from him, and he hated the adulatory attitude of some people. Praise, which he felt due, he accepted as a matter of course, being himself the most censorious critic of his work. At the same time he was very sensitive to any critical opinion, so sensitive that I have heard him say, all the praise he had ever received didn't outweigh for the moment a spiteful and unkindly criticism, even though the criticism (he once added) was directed against the straightness of his toe-nail.

Amongst the experiences of intercourse with him, nothing was more memorable than to hear him read his poetry. The roll of his great voice acted sometimes almost like an incantation, so that when it was a new poem he was reading, the power of realizing its actual nature was subordinated to the wonder at the sound of the tones. Sometimes, as in "The Passing of Arthur," it was a long chant, in which the expression lay chiefly in the value given to each syllable, sometimes a swell of sound like an organ's; often came tones of infinite pathos, delicate and tender, then others of mighty volume and passionate strength.

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UNFINISHED POEM OF THIS PERIOD.

*Reticence.*

Not to Silence would I build
A temple in her naked field;
Not to her would raise a shrine:
She no goddess is of mine;
But to one of finer sense,
Her half sister, Reticence.

Latest of her worshippers,
I would shrine her in my verse!
Not like Silence shall she stand,
Finger-lipt, but with right hand
Moving toward her lip, and there
Hovering, thoughtful, poised in air.
Her garment slips, the left hand holds
Her[1] up-gather'd garment folds,
And veils a breast more fair to me
Than aught of Anadyomené!

[1] The two *Her's* coming together vexed him and he threw the poem aside—unfinished—and forgot all about it.

Near the shrine, but half in sun,
I would have a river run,
Such as never overflows
With flush of rain, or molten snows,
Often shallow, pierced with light,
Often deep beyond the sight,
Here and there about the lawn
Wholly mute, but ever drawn
Under either grassy brink
In many a silver loop and link
Variously from its far spring,
With long tracts of murmuring,
Partly river, partly brook,
Which in one delicious nook,
Where the doubtful shadows play,
Lightly lisping, breaks away;
Thence, across the summit hurl'd,
Showers in a whisper o'er the world.

# CHAPTER IV.

## "THE HOLY GRAIL," 1869, AND MY MOTHER'S JOURNAL, 1870–1872.

Trinity College (Cambridge), his old College, had this year made my father an Honorary Fellow; and it was from Cambridge men in particular that he received commendations of his "Holy Grail." Among others Maurice wrote:

CAMBRIDGE, *Dec. 18th*, 1869.

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

I did not give myself credit for so much of Diomedean craft in changing brass armour for golden. But if I can persuade any who listened to me to seek for the "Holy Grail" and to increase the "Arthur" standard of character above any Greek one, my aim will be accomplished and I shall thankfully own how much more you have contributed to it than we lecturers and parsons can.

Pray remember me affectionately to Mrs Tennyson as well as to my godson and Lionel. I had hoped we might have seen you this winter in the Isle of Wight, but we have been urged to try Torquay and have taken a house there for two months.

Believe me very truly yours,

F. D. MAURICE.

About "The Holy Grail" my father said to me: "At twenty-four I meant to write an epic or a drama of King

Arthur; and I thought that I should take twenty years about the work. They will now say that I have been forty years about it. 'The Holy Grail' is one of the most imaginative of my poems. I have expressed there my strong feeling as to the Reality of the Unseen. The end, when the king speaks of his work and of his visions, is intended to be the summing up of all in the highest note by the highest of human men. These three lines in Arthur's speech are the (spiritually) central lines of the Idylls:

> In moments when he feels he cannot die,
> And knows himself no vision to himself,
> Nor the High God a vision.

The general English view of God is as of an immeasurable clergyman; and some mistake the devil for God."

He said again to us with deep feeling, in January 1869: "Yes, it is true that there are moments when the flesh is nothing to me, when I feel and know the flesh to be the vision, God and the Spiritual the only real and true. Depend upon it, the Spiritual *is* the real: it belongs to one more than the hand and the foot. You may tell me that my hand and my foot are only imaginary symbols of my existence, I could believe you; but you never, never can convince me that the *I* is not an eternal Reality, and that the Spiritual is not the true and real part of me." These words he spoke with such passionate earnestness that a solemn silence fell on us as he left the room[1].

The new volume contained besides "The Holy Grail," "Lucretius[2]," "The Coming of Arthur," "Pelleas

[1] I have taken the words of this paragraph from Mrs Bradley's diary written at the time: I remember the scene well.

[2] Munro, the great Lucretian, wrote praising "Lucretius," and saying the poem was perfect but for one word, "neat-herd."

and Ettarre," "The Passing of Arthur," "Northern Farmer (New Style)," "The Golden Supper," "The Victim," "Wages," "The Higher Pantheism," "Flower in the crannied wall."

After the publication of this book his fame in America grew extraordinarily, and every post brought him innumerable American letters.

One little incident pleased him much. A literary society at Philadelphia called itself after him "The Tennyson Society," and asked him for a motto. He sent this answer:

*Sept. 9th*, 1869.

DEAR SIR,

You have done me honour in associating my name with your institution, and you have my hearty good wishes for its success. Will the following Welsh motto be of any service to you? I have it in encaustic tiles on the pavement of my entrance hall: "Y Gwir yn erbyn y byd" (The truth against the world). A very old British apophthegm, and I think a noble one, and which may serve your purpose either in Welsh or English. Your letter arrived when I was away from England, or would have been earlier answered.

Believe me yours truly,

A. TENNYSON.

When certain adverse critics discovered that throughout all the new "Idylls of the King" there was a great moral significance, he was attacked with the cry of "Art for Art's sake." After reading one of these attacks he reeled off this epigram:

*Art for Art's sake*
*(instead of Art for Art—and—Man's sake)*[1].

Art for Art's sake! Hail, truest Lord of Hell!
Hail Genius, Master of the Moral Will!
'The filthiest of all paintings painted well
Is mightier than the purest painted ill!"
Yes, mightier than the purest painted well,
So prone are we toward the broad way to Hell.

These lines in a measure expressed his strong and sorrowful conviction, that the English were beginning to forget what was, in Voltaire's words, the glory of English literature—"No nation has treated in poetry moral ideas with more energy and depth than the English nation."

Of all the "Idylls of the King" "The Holy Grail" seems to me to express most my father's highest self. Perhaps this is because I saw him, in the writing of this poem more than in the writing of any other, with that far away rapt look on his face, which he had whenever he worked at a story that touched him greatly, or because I vividly recall the *inspired* way in which he chanted to us the different parts of the poem as they were composed[2].

[1] He quoted George Sand: "L'art pour art est un vain mot: l'art pour le vrai, l'art pour le beau et le bon, voilà la religion que je cherche."

[2] An able review of the four first published "Idylls" (*Ed. Rev.* 1859), written by Coventry Patmore, remarks (what is eminently true of "The Holy Grail") that "Since the definite formation of the English language no poetry has been written with so small an admixture of Latin as the 'Idylls of the King,' and what will sound still stranger in the ears of those who have been in the habit of regarding the Latin element as essential to the dignity of poetry, no language has surpassed in epic dignity the English of these poems."

## 1870.

At the beginning of the new year the Bradleys again visited us.

My father was extraordinarily happy now that he felt that his great work of the Epic of Arthur was nearing its completion: and it impressed the Bradleys that, in spite of vexatious publishing matters, he was marvellously calm and genial.

*January 11th.* Mrs Bradley wrote:

Both at dinner and afterwards at the "Round Table" (where we have dessert in the drawing-room) Mr Tennyson talked a great deal, unusually much at dinner, when he is oftenest rather silent. I asked him, "Did he know that 'gleam' was an old Lincolnshire word used formerly in the Fens for the cry of the curlew?" alluding to the line in "Locksley Hall," "dreary gleams about the moorland flying over Locksley Hall." "I never heard it," he said, "I wish I had." He thought it curious and interesting, explained that the passage in question "meant nothing more than to express the flying gleams of light across a dreary moorland, when looking at it under peculiarly dreary circumstances. 'Curlews' only a feature in the scene; but an unfortunate misprint, merely the omission of a comma, had given rise to very various interpretations of the passage." A great many were quoted. He wished he had used the word "sweeping" instead of "flying," as it would have been more explicit. He read aloud "The Holy Grail."

He said: "The first poetry that moved me was my own at five years old. When I was eight, I remember making a line I thought grander than Campbell, or Byron, or Scott. I rolled it out, it was this: 'With slaughterous sons of thunder rolled the flood'—great nonsense of course, but I thought it fine." He was very jovial, and talked on all imaginable topics.

Spoke a little of the stir being made just now about "Women's Rights." The account of some meeting on the subject in America amused him. He said that all the great men that had ever lived were made out as sort of beasts with a view to exalt women.

"You know," he added, "that I think women much better (morally) than we are."

My father sent this answer to a letter from James Spedding approving of "The Holy Grail":

FARRINGFORD, *Jan.* 19*th*, 1870.

MY DEAR JAMES,

Send the box, please, not without your new volume hither. I shall be grateful for both. I am glad that you find anything to approve of in the "H. G." I have not yet finished the Arthurian legends, otherwise I might consider your Job[1] theme. Strange that I quite forgot our conversation thereupon. Where is Westbourne Terrace? If I had ever clearly made out I should assuredly have called. I have often when in town past by the old 60, the "vedovo sito," with a groan, thinking of you as no longer the comeatable, runupableto, smokeablewith J. S. of old, but as a family man, far in the west, sitting cigarless among many nieces, clean and forlorn, but I hope to see you somewhere in '70, for I have taken chambers in Victoria Street for three years, though they are not yet furnished.

Where is the difficulty of that line in the "Flower"? It is rather rough certainly, but, had you followed the clue of "little flower" in the preceding line, you would not have stumbled over this, which is accentual anapæst,

What you are, root and all:

rough—doubtless.

Believe me yours ever,

A. TENNYSON.

[1] Mr Spedding said he wanted a "Modern Job" by Tennyson.

Edward Fitzgerald also wrote about "The Holy Grail":

WOODBRIDGE, *Jan.* 1870.

MY DEAR OLD ALFRED,

I bought your vol. (the "Holy Grail") at Lowestoft; and, when I returned home here for Xmas, found a copy from your new publisher. As he sent it I suppose at your orders, I write about it what I might say to you were we together over a pipe, instead of so far asunder.

The whole myth of Arthur's Round Table Dynasty in Britain presents itself before me with a sort of cloudy, Stonehenge grandeur. I am not sure if the old knights' adventures do not tell upon me better, touched in some lyrical way (like your own "Lady of Shalott") than when elaborated into epic form. I never could care for Spenser, Tasso, or even Ariosto, whose epic has a ballad ring about it. But then I never could care much for the old prose Romances either, except *Don Quixote*. So, as this was always the case with me, I suppose my brain is wanting in this bit of its dissected map.

Anyhow, Alfred, while I feel how pure, noble and holy your work is, and whole phrases, lines and sentences of it will abide with me, and, I am sure, with men after me, I read on till the "Lincolnshire Farmer" drew tears to my eyes. I was got back to the substantial rough-spun Nature I knew; and the old brute, invested by you with the solemn humour of Humanity, like Shakespeare's *Shallow*, became a more pathetic phenomenon than the knights who revisit the world in your other verse. There! I can't help it, and have made a clean breast; and you need only laugh at one more of "old Fitz's crotchets," which I daresay you anticipated. To compare X— to my own "paltry Poet" is, I say, to compare an old Jew's Curiosity Shop with the Phidian Marbles. They talk of "metaphysical depth and subtlety," pray is there none in "The Palace of Art," "The Vision of Sin" (which last touches on the limit of disgust without ever falling in), "Locksley Hall" also, with some little passion, I think! only that all these being clear to the bottom, as well as beautiful, do not seem to cockney eyes so deep as muddy waters? I suppose you are at Farringford with your

boys for the holidays. Let me wish you all a Happy New Year, and believe me your faithful old crotchety Retainer,

E. F. G.

P.S. I also think I shall one day send you my little piece of knightlihood (*Euphranor*), of which Cowell told me you liked parts, and from which (in consequence) I have cut out what seems to me the most disagreeable part, leaving much behind, together with what still seems to me pretty. I had not looked at it for 15 years till Cowell told me what you said; and that made me cut out, and insert some pages.

*January 25th.* The Ritchies and Annie Thackeray dined with us.

My father said to them: "I don't find it difficult to believe in the Infinity of Worlds." Then, after trying to make us all realize the rate at which the earth whirls through space, and that every two days the solar system has rushed one million miles towards a certain point in the constellation of Hercules, and that light takes millions of years to travel from some of the stars, the light of which has not yet reached us, and other astronomical sublimities—he observed, "From the starry spheres to think of the airs given themselves by county families in ball-rooms! One lady I remember early in the century in Lincolnshire, drawing herself up on hearing that the daughters of a neighbouring family were taking lessons in drawing and singing, and saying, 'My daughters don't learn drawing.'" He continued: "Miss Austen understood the smallness of life to perfection. She was a great artist, equal in her small sphere to Shakespeare. I think *Persuasion* and *Mansfield Park* are my favourites. There is a saying that if God made the country, and man the town, the devil made the little country town. There is nothing equal to the smallness of a small town."

After a magnificent recitation of "Lycidas" came the unexpected outburst, "I don't suppose one blessed

German can appreciate the glory of the verse as I can," and on hearing that one of the party had not read through *Paradise Lost* he called out, "Shameless daughter of your age." The indifference to religion of the age was touched on, and X— began to uphold Shelley's views for the regeneration of mankind.

A. T. Shelley had not common-sense!

X—. Well, but had Christ common-sense?

A. T. Christ had more common-sense than you or I, Madam.

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*My mother's journal.—Death of Sir John Simeon, Franco-German War.*

*March 1st.* Aldworth. Hallam read the 4th *Æneid* with A.; they study Virgil together daily. We were interested by an article of Froude's on *Government and the Governed.*

He received from a stranger, Mr John White of Cowes, a melancholy letter, and a present of a cartload of wood—old oak from one of the broken up men-of-war. A. wrote to him.

FARRINGFORD, *March 8th*, 1870.

DEAR SIR,

Your present has rather amazed me, though not unpleasantly: so I accept it with thanks, and I will sit by the "blue light" gratefully, and hope for you that *your* light may be no longer "low," and if you ever come my way I shall be glad to see you.

Yours faithfully, A. TENNYSON.

*May 23rd.* The terrible blow of Sir John Simeon's death at Friburg fell on us just as we were starting for Aldworth.

*May 31st.* A. went to Swainston for the funeral. He wrote

"In the Garden at Swainston[1]" (smoking one of Sir John's pipes in the Swainston garden). "All dreadfully sad and trying, and seeming all the sadder, for the sun shone and the roses bloomed profusely[2]."

A. very sad, his loss haunted him. Sir John was a brother to us.

A. wrote to Lady Simeon:

ALDWORTH, *June 27th*, 1870.

MY DEAR LADY SIMEON,

Of course nothing could be more grateful to me than some memorial of my much-loved and ever honoured friend, the only man on earth, I verily believe, to whom I could, and have more than once opened my whole heart; and he also has given me in many a conversation at Farringford in my little attic his utter confidence. I knew none like him for tenderness and generosity, not to mention his other noble qualities, and he was the very Prince of Courtesy; but I need not tell you this; anything, little book, or whatever you will choose, send me or bring when you come; and do pray come on the 4th July, and we will be all alone; and Louie can come, when she will, and you can spare her.

Believe me, always affectionately yours,

A. TENNYSON.

This June A. was asked to become President of the Newsvendors' Benevolent Institution. His letter to Mr Walter Jones ran as follows:

*June* 1870.

SIR,

First let me thank the Committee and yourself for the honour you have desired to confer upon me,

[1] First published in the Cabinet Edition of the Collected Poems, 1874.

[2] Letter from my father.

which, however, I feel obliged to decline accepting; for I am neither a diner out, nor a speaker after dinner, nor could without violence to the truth be called a man of business. I should be but a *roi fainéant*, which I don't wish to be—the square man in the round hole—but, if you wish for the square man in the square hole, I am sure Lord Houghton would be proud to serve your cause as President.

At the same time, with the permission of your Committee, I should be happy to be one of your Vice-Presidents by the side of my friend Longfellow.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient Servant, A. TENNYSON.

*July 26th.* Aldworth. A. was laid up with gout in town. Hallam and I went to town to fetch him, and that I might receive instructions from our kind friend Sir James Paget[1]. Lady Augusta Stanley took us in her carriage to the station. Lady Charlotte Locker with us. A. told us that war between France and Germany was declared.

At this time he constantly anticipated that England, if she continued as she was, unprepared, would be some day invaded and smashed; and said, "We rashly expose ourselves to danger, and in our press offend foreign powers, being the most beastly self-satisfied nation in the world."

*Nov. 1st.* What a craze the tendency now-a-days to invent gossiping stories! Emily[2] copied the passage in Miss Mitford's letters, which states that A. dug the garden of Miss Repton's

[1] Sir James had strictly charged my father not to touch his leg. One day he said: "The doctor says that I mustn't scratch my leg, but I can't help it, and last night I scratched it till I could have shrieked with glory."

[2] My father's sister.

father at Sevenoaks, whereas A. never saw him or his garden. Then there was an illustrated paper came, which stated that he was at Louth School until he went to Trinity, the fact being, he says, that he remained at Louth two or three years; and after ten he was taught at home by his father, until he went to Trinity.

Another story the paper gave of his having been taken into custody as a smuggler, when watching a stormy sea,—the only foundation for this being that one wild night on the Farringford Down the coast-guard said to him, "Who goes there? O you, Sir! a stormy night!" or some such words.

Mrs Bowen told us a nice story of a little boy in the village who had informed her that Mr Tennyson was "the gentleman who made *poets* for the Queen under the stars,—that policeman had often seen him at it."

*Nov. 4th.* Mr Arthur Sullivan, Mr Knowles, and Mr Strahan came. Mr Sullivan wished to publish the "Window Songs[1]." A. did not like publishing songs that were so trivial at such a grave crisis of affairs in Europe; but he had given his promise to Mr Sullivan about them, and "He that sweareth unto his neighbour and disappointeth him not" determined us. So they are to be published with the protest: "I am sorry that my four-year-old puppet should have to dance at all in the dark shadow of these days; but the music is now completed, and I am bound by my promise."

*Nov. 8th.* Mr Peach, the dear old Cornish geologist, is here. A. read me Pepys' *Diary*. At night he repeated some of "The Last Tournament" which he had just written. We read about starlings in Morris; I did not know (what A. had put into his Idyll from his own observation) that the starlings in June, after they have brought up their young ones, congregate in flocks in a reedy place for the sake of sociability.

*Nov. 12th.* Aunt Franklin (Lady Franklin) and Sophy Cracroft came to luncheon from Moor Park. Both charmed with our view. A. declined going in a ship with the astronomers to Cadiz as he had hoped to do, finding that a poem on the eclipse was expected from him, "a thing absurd and out of

[1] Printed first at the Canford Manor Press in 1867, when my father was staying with the Guests. Published by Strahan, with music by Arthur Sullivan, December, 1870.

the question." Likely enough that no one will go if this insolent despatch of Gortschakoff brings war, as it should do if not withdrawn. A. talked, as he had done of late, chiefly of the state of England and Europe. He cared so much for this that most other things just then seemed matters of indifference to him. He thought of writing to Lord Granville, to tell him how grateful he was for his spirited remonstrance: and he said, "How strange England cannot see her true policy lies in a close union with our colonies!" He added: "We ought to have all boys at school drilled, so that we may be more ready for defensive war than now."

## 1871.

*My mother's journal.—Death of Spedding's brother, Despondency, Jenny Lind, "The Last Tournament," Tourgueneff, George Eliot, Gladstone, Wales, Huxley, Illness of the Prince of Wales.*

On New Year's day A. received this touching letter from Mr Spedding:

WESTBOURNE TERRACE,
*Dec. 21st*, 1870.

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

I should have answered your very kind letter sooner, but I doubted which house to direct to, as you seemed to be on the point of moving. I suppose I shall be safe now in writing to Farringford.

My brother's death was altogether sudden and unexpected; for he had been remarkably well all the year and showed no symptoms of failing in any way, unless possibly a very slight appearance of the "bowed shoulder of a bland old age" reminded you that he had just completed his threescore years and ten, and how lightly they lay upon him. Till within two days of his death there had been no symptoms of illness observable by anybody; nor were the symptoms which appeared then such as to cause immediate alarm. His first attack of pain was on Saturday. It was not till Monday afternoon that another severe attack made them send for the doctor, who pronounced the seat of disorder to be in the heart but did not apprehend any present danger. He died in the middle of that night without

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a word or a struggle or a sign of distress. "God's finger touched him and he slept."

When death comes in the middle of life, I do not mean in middle age but with no symptoms of decay by way of warning, people think it an aggravation. To me the premonitory decay seems the worst part of the business, a business in which man and nature between them are too apt to make ugly work. To have lived till 70 in full health of body and mind, and then to depart without knowing it, is surely for a mortal man a lot not to be regretted or repudiated. And though for the survivors the shock is greater at the time, it brings far less suffering even to them, than the more ordinary fate of tedious and distressing sickness, with all its miserable anxieties, and things painful not only to witness but ever after to remember. In this case there is nothing to remember which is in any way distressing. While the life lasted it was pleasant to look upon: it departed in pure peace and rest: leaving no troubles behind,—only the sense of a good thing gone, and the want which is the measure of its value.

Such a blow could not have been better borne (according to my notions) than this has been by all the family: no shutting up with grief: no hanging of the past with black and making remembrance uncheerful: but such a state of mind as becomes those who look upon death as upon the entrance of a future life, who know that their sorrow is for themselves, not for him, and to whom the memory of the past remains a secure possession, sacred but not sad. The house when I left it was going on almost as it would have done if he had only been absent on a journey, leaving his son to take his place in the meantime.

Yours very truly, JAMES SPEDDING.

A. wrote to Mr Oscar Browning:

FARRINGFORD, *Sunday, Feb. 12th*, 1871.

MY DEAR MR BROWNING,

I ought before this to have thanked you for having sent me the apparition-story[1], and your friend

[1] The story of Professor Conington's wraith being seen in Oriel Lane at the time of his death.

for having written it out for me. Pardon the delay, and accept my thanks now for him, and for yourself. Could he and would he get for me Miss Cobbe's? I rejoice that my few words about the teaching of history seem to have borne fruit at Eton, and I am glad that Lionel was present at your lecture: he has, I believe, a mind really capable of great thoughts, but is so impressionable that it is more important to him than to most boys to have these continually put before him. Will you tell Mr Johnson[1] how exquisite I think his translation of "Hesper," which I have just now seen in this Sunday's *Spectator*? My wife's kind remembrances, and

Believe me yours ever,

A. TENNYSON.

*February.* A. received Mr Jowett's four volumes of Plato, a most welcome gift for itself and for the donor. I cut open the *Phædo* for him. He talked on the subjects nearest his heart, the Resurrection and the Immortality of the Soul. He read to me some of the *Edinburgh Royal Society Transactions.*

Lord and Lady Elcho called: he and A. discussed Cardwell's army reforms; something more radical seems to be needed.

*Feb. 26th.* In Maiden's Croft. He spoke despondingly of the tone of literature, as is his wont now from time to time. He foreboded "the fiercest battle the world has yet known between good and evil, faith and unfaith."

What does midnight to-night bring? Peace or War for France and Germany? Surely peace. The continuance of such a war is too horrible to think of.

A. has been taking pains to help the Committee of the City of London Fund for the relief of Paris.

He copied "Break, Break," for Lady F. Cavendish, as the first MS of it had been burnt at Holker: and wrote to Mr Palgrave inclosing the copy.

[1] The author of *Ionica* had translated "In Memoriam," CXXI.

FARRINGFORD. *May 4th*, 1871.

DEAR P.

Here it is! a weariness of the flesh writing out my own things, but I have done it. I only wish that the Gainsboroughs and Reynolds were as easily replaceable as this MS. Love from myself and wife to yours.

Ever yours, A. TENNYSON.

P.S. This place has been very full. Jenny Lind coming to dine here to-day. We go to the mountains about the end of this month.

*May 4th.* Jenny Lind came to Farringford and sang "Auld Lang Syne" and "Auld Robin Gray" for A. at his especial request. Of these and "Bonnie Doon" (the words of the last ruined for the music he thought) he was very fond.

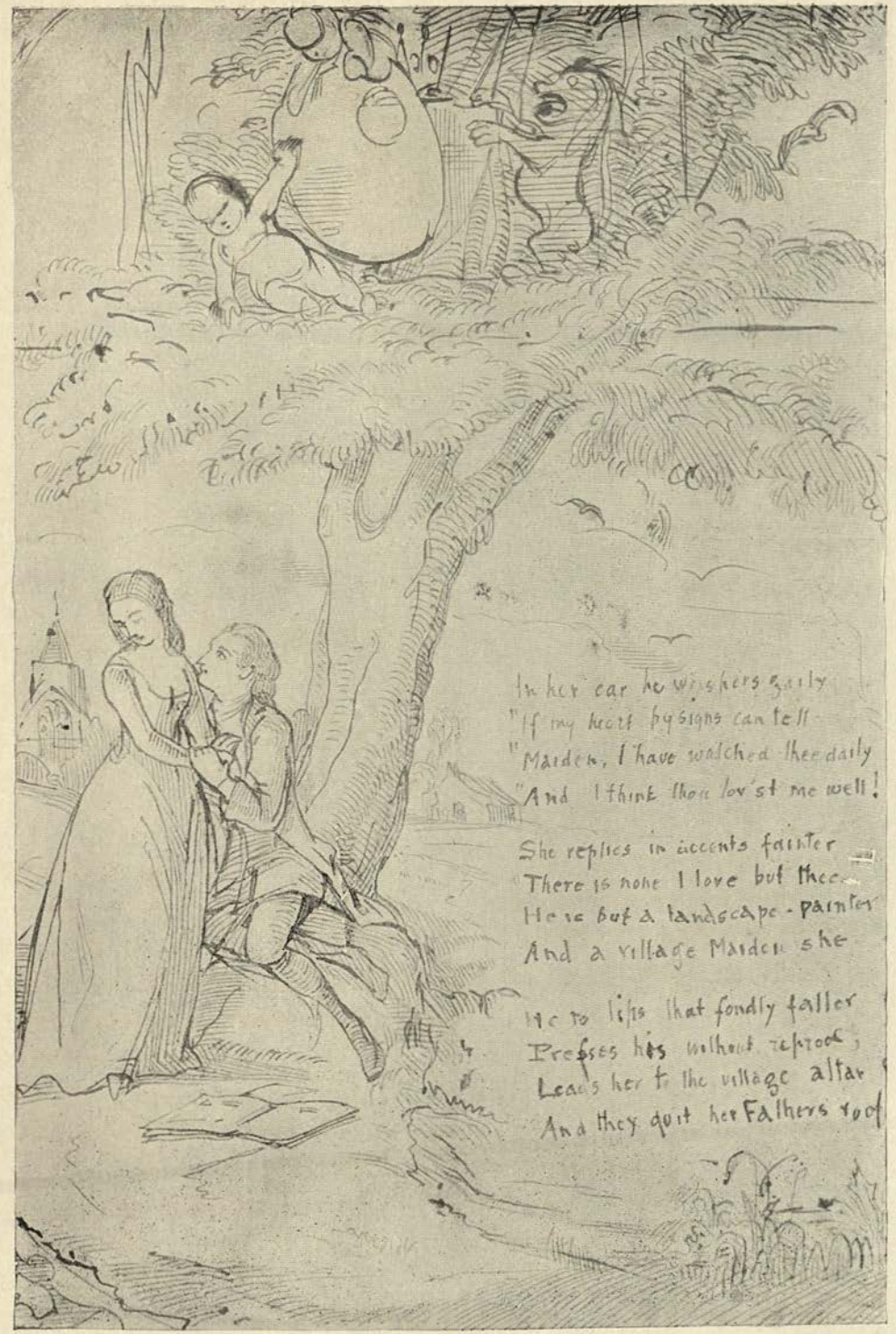
She sang Handel and some of the *Elijah* magnificently. She is full of feeling and of fun, and is deeply religious.

*May 21st.* He read me his "Tristram[1]" ("Last Tournament"), the plan of which he had been for some weeks discussing with me. Very grand and terrible. We went into the kitchen garden to see the splendid crimson poppies with their black marks inside the blossom (favourite flowers with A.).

*June 5th.* Mr Edward Fitzgerald wrote:

Very imperfect as Laurence's portrait[2] (of A.) is, it is nevertheless the *best* painted portrait I have seen; and certainly the *only* one of old days. "Blubber-lipt" I remember once Alfred called it; so it is; but still the only one of old days, and still the best of all to my thinking. I like to go back to days before the beard, which makes rather a Dickens of A. T. *in the photographs*—to my mind. If you are at all of this mind, tell Laurence to send it back to you, swept and garnished with a suitable frame, and hang it up, where *you* at any rate may have it before your eyes, with all its imperfections on its head. When last I heard from Spedding, half a year ago, I think, he said that Alfred had never called for the drawing by Thackeray of the Lord of Burleigh[3]

[1] Just written. [2] Now at Aldworth.
[3] Now in my father's study at Farringford.


In her ear he whispers gaily
"If my heart by signs can tell
"Maiden, I have watched thee daily
"And I think thou lov'st me well!
She replies in accents fainter
There is none I love but thee
He is but a landscape-painter
And a village Maiden she
He to lips that fondly falter
Presses his without reproof;
Leads her to the village altar
And they quit her Fathers roof

"THE LORD OF BURLEIGH"

*From a Sketch by W. M. Thackeray*

which I sent him. Tell him I don't think Browning would have served me so, and I mean to prefer his poems for the future.

The following letter was written by A. to Mrs Elmhirst (née Rawnsley) on the death of her son:

HASLEMERE, *June*, 1871.

MY DEAR SOPHY,

I ought to have written to you before to express my sympathy with you on the loss of your son, and I thought of writing at the moment when I first heard of your great affliction, but somehow I myself have always felt that letters of condolence, when the grief is yet raw and painful, are like vain voices in the ears of the deaf, not heard or only half heard. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness," and a stranger intermeddleth not therewith, though I am not a stranger indeed, but your old friend from your childhood. However, when Drummond and Catherine were here the other day, he said he thought you would be soothed by hearing from me; so I write, though I doubt whether I can bring you any solace, except indeed by stating my own belief that the son, whom you so loved, is not really what we call dead, but more actually living than when alive here.

You cannot catch the voice, or feel the hands, or kiss the cheek, that is all; a separation for an hour, not an eternal farewell. If it were not so, that which made us would seem too cruel a Power to be worshipped, and could not be loved, but I trust that you believe all this, and by this time have attained to some degree of tranquillity: and your husband also.

I hear that *he* was very amiable and full of promise, and the manner of his death, and its taking place far away from you, and its suddenness, must have so added sorrow to sorrow, that I almost fear you will think I

write coldly, but I do not feel coldly. Kindest remembrances to Elmhirst, and also to the Hallidays, and

Believe me affectionately yours,

A. TENNYSON.

*June 22nd.* A. and Hallam went to town for the Royal Academy.

*June.* Aldworth. Tourgueneff the Russian novelist (whose *Lisa* and *Pères et Enfants* A. liked much) and Mr Ralston arrived. Tourgueneff (a tall, large, white-haired man with a strong face) was most interesting, and told us stories of Russian life with a great graphic power and vivacity.

He told us how, in the Cossack council, they used all to stand in a circle and talk or fight until they were unanimous, whether the question was great or small. It might be an election of "Peter" or "John," and they would fight till all said "Peter."

He spoke too of a wonderful instance of the "Origin of legends" as he called it, which A. recounted in these words afterwards.

"Before the actual enfranchisement of the serfs by the Czar, many became unruly. So the Czar resolved to go on a progress thro' his dominions. At each place the serfs were assembled, and he made a little speech, telling them that he was the Czar who had freed them, and that he expected them to be obedient to their old masters until nine years were passed (which he had fixed as the limit of their serfdom), and that then they were to be entirely free.

When the Czar came to Tourgueneff's village, Tourgueneff was ill, and could not accompany his serfs, but the Starosta or head man of the village went.

Presently he, with about thirty serfs, rushed into the room where Tourgueneff was sitting, and they all began talking together, 'Oh we have seen such a wonderful thing.' Tourgueneff said, 'I cannot hear you, if you speak all at once: let the Starosta speak!' Accordingly the Starosta spoke: 'There came a chariot drawn by four horses, and inside the chariot was a beautiful man in glittering armour, but he was not the Czar. He passed by us and vanished into the wilderness. Then came another magnificent chariot with a still more beautiful man, in

resplendent and bejewelled armour; and this was the White Czar of all the Russias! And he stood up in his chariot, and spread his arms abroad! Then he beat upon his breast, and he said, 'Do you know who I am?' Then we all fell to the earth with our heads in the dust, and we saw nothing, but he beat upon his breast again three times, and cried aloud, 'Obey, obey, obey,' and then the chariot began to move, and we watched him as far as eye could see, and the chariot whirled him away, and he vanished into the wilderness.'

And all the serfs of the village chimed in, whenever the Starosta paused, 'Yes, yes, it is all as he says.' When Tourgueneff was well enough, he went to the station, and asked what had really happened, and was informed that the Czar did not once get up in his carriage, that he was dressed in an ordinary frock-coat like an English gentleman, and that he made the same little quiet speech he had made at all the villages in the country. Tourgueneff said: 'No doubt all the serfs had their heads in the dust and dared not look at the Czar, and were too scared to hear what he said, and had imagined the whole scene.'"

Tourgueneff and A. had great games at German backgammon.

*June 28th.* Tourgueneff received a letter about the sale of his home in Baden, and to our regret had to go to-day.

*July 14th.* A. travelled down from London with G. H. Lewes, who took him to his home at Witley and introduced him to Mrs Lewes (George Eliot). A. thought her "like the picture of Savonarola." She told him that Professor Sylvester's laws for verse-making had been useful to her. A. replied that he could not understand this. He likes her *Adam Bede*, *Scenes of Clerical Life*, *Silas Marner* best of her novels. *Romola* he thinks somewhat out of her depth.

*July 20th.* We drove to Cowdray Park, and home by Fernhurst. A. specially admired the large Spanish chestnuts and the Templar's walk of yews at Cowdray.

*July 22nd.* A. and Hallam drove to meet Mr and Mrs Gladstone and their daughter Helen. A telegram came to say they would not arrive till a later train, so A. and Hallam called on Mr and Mrs Lewes. She is delightful in a *tête-à-tête*, and speaks in a soft soprano voice, which almost sounds like a fine falsetto, with her strong masculine face. An interesting evening

with talk ranging everywhere. At the Gladstones' request A. read "The Holy Grail," which Mr Gladstone admired. We discussed the Goschen parish council plan and other social reforms.

*July 23rd.* Hallam and our guests attended a schoolroom service at Haslemere (for the church was being enlarged).

After luncheon A., Hallam, and the Gladstones walked to the end of Blackdown. Mr and Mrs Gladstone frisked about like boy and girl in the heather. "A very noble fellow," A. called him, "and perfectly unaffected."

At dinner the conversation most interesting, about politics and the stormy times ahead; and Lacordaire, and his liberal Catholicism. Mr Gladstone assured us that he was a "Conservative," and that he * * * feared "extreme measures from the Opposition." He is a man of versatile mind and great impulsiveness. One could not but feel humbled in the presence of those whose life was evidently one long self-sacrifice, and, one would hope, quickened to more of it in one's own life. Mrs Gladstone wears herself out by all her hospital work in addition to the work of a prime minister's wife. Her daughter helps her, and helps her brother also in his bad Lambeth parish.

A good many people were at the station on the 24th when they went away to London.

*July 29th.* Mrs Greville, Mrs Fanny Kemble, and Lord Houghton came to luncheon. Fanny Kemble read Shakespeare magnificently, with tears streaming down her cheeks. She told us that, when she was nearly drowned, she did not recall the scenes of her former life, but the "terrible thing was that all her life appeared a blank." As they drove away up the hill, we heard her command Lord Houghton in her tragic way, "Get down, my lord, from off the box, for you are no inconsiderable weight."

A. is rejoiced that the National Education Bill has been passed: he admires Mr Forster's courage. "No education, no franchise," is A.'s epigram.

*August 7th.* A. and Hallam set off to-day for North Wales; Llanberis and Snowdon by way of Uriconium, staying with the Archibald Peels[1] at Wrexham.

A letter, English hexameters, from the travellers. They had

[1] Mr Archibald Peel was a most faithful friend from 1851 onwards.

arrived at Llanberis: a jovial party apparently in the room above theirs in the Hotel Victoria.

Dancing above was heard, heavy feet to the sound of a light air,
Light were the feet no doubt but floors were misrepresenting.

Next morning they started early.

Walked to the Vale Gwynant, Llyn Gwynant shone very distant
Touched by the morning sun, great mountains glorying o'er it,
Moel Hebog loom'd out, and Siabod tower'd up in æther:
Liked Beddgelert much, flat green with murmur of waters,
Bathed in a deep still pool not far from Pont Aberglaslyn—
(Ravens croak'd, and took white, human skin for a lambkin).
Then we returned.—What a day! Many more if fate will allow it.

*Aug.* 31*st.* The travellers have come back. A. drove to the Lewes'. He read to them, and last of all at G. H. Lewes' request "Guinevere," which made George Eliot weep.

*Sept.* 1*st.* A. takes long walks in the evenings. He is very cheerful, and is reading me a book about Russia. He is interested in the strange sects among the Russians, and the character of the Russian peasant and the strong feeling of unity in the nation. He has read and given me to read *Fraser's Magazine* with suggestive articles on colonial federation, and against the inclosure of commons, against which he has always protested. A general Colonial Council for the purposes of defence sounds to us sensible. He advocated inter-colonial conferences in England; and was of opinion that the foremost colonial ministers ought to be admitted to the Privy Council or to some other Imperial council, where they could have a voice in Imperial affairs.

*Sept.* 4*th.* We both read Browning's *Balaustion.* Heracles the free, the joyous, the strong, the self-sacrificer, a grand creation.

*Sept.* 8*th.* A. went to the George Howards at Naworth Castle. He liked the free, independent peasantry. He talks of an ancient stone trough, about which the members of an Archæological Society were discoursing, when a countryman

stepped forward, still bitter with the old border spirit: "It is where we washed them Scots in before we hanged them."

*Nov.* 10*th.* Aldworth. A. sent his poem "England and America" to the *New York Ledger.*

*Nov.* 11*th.* Mr Huxley and Mr Knowles arrived here on a visit. Mr Huxley was charming. We had much talk. He was chivalrous, wide, and earnest, so that one could not but enjoy talking with him. There was a discussion on George Eliot's humility. Huxley and A. both thought her a humble woman, despite a dogmatic manner of assertion that had come upon her latterly in her writings. Mr Knowles and Mr Arnold White[1] have been kind in arranging A.'s publishing business. Mr Knowles's active nature, I think, sometimes spurs A. on to work when he is flagging[2].

*Nov.* 19*th.* The new poem, "Sir Gareth," which he has almost written down, is full of youth, vigour, and beauty.

*Dec.* 11*th.* Anxious telegrams about the Prince of Wales. Touching accounts reach us of the Princess; her speech failed her from anxiety, and when she was allowed to go into the Prince's room, she stood for hours looking at him through a hole in the screen.

This illness has quelled the chatter about the expense of royalty to England. A. says, "Our Government plus Royalty is the cheapest government of any great country in the world."

His new study was not quite finished, and he wandered about drying the wet places on the walls with a hot poker.

*Christmas.* I was very unwell, and he said, "I leave you to your two sons' nursing," but he did not, and watched over me as tenderly and carefully as ever.

He does his work in the morning regularly after his breakfast at 8 o'clock; then walks before luncheon with the boys or a friend, and one or two dogs.

He has inserted his "Last Tournament" in the December *Contemporary*, and wrote on Dec. 21st a letter thanking Mr Browning for his *Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau.*

[1] Afterwards Sir Arnold White, the well-known lawyer.

[2] My father would at this time point his finger at Mr Knowles with a grim smile and say: "I was often urged to go on with the 'Idylls,' but I stuck: and then this beast said, 'Do it,' and I did it."

## 1872.

*Letters, My mother's journal, Paris and the Chartreuse, "Gareth," "Epilogue to the Idylls."*

Mr Emerson wrote about his daughter's visit to England:

*Jan. 21st*, 1872.

MY DEAR MR TENNYSON,

I cannot let my daughter pass through London without tasking your benevolence to give her the sight of your face. Her husband Colonel Wm. H. Forbes (himself a good soldier in the Massachusetts Volunteers in the War of the Rebellion) and Edith set forth to-morrow for England, France and Italy, and I of course shall not think they see England unless they see you. I pray you to gratify them and me so far. You shall not write a line the less, and I shall add this grace to your genius. With kindest remembrance of my brief meeting with you,

Yours always, R. W. EMERSON.

The following letter was sent to Mr Gladstone about an application from Z— for a pension:

*Feb. 5th*, 1872.

MY DEAR GLADSTONE,

You see that I am requested by Browning, Houghton, and others, to forward the enclosed to you, and I do not suppose that you can go far wrong in pensioning poor Z—, who has done hard work in more ways than one, and is now on the threshold of old age. Heaven help you fair through the Session, like enough to be a rough one—but if you let those Yankees get anything like their way of you in the Alabama claims, I won't pay my "ship-money" any more than old Hampden.

Ever yours, A. TENNYSON.

*Answer from the Right Honourable W. E. Gladstone.*

11 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE,
*Feb. 9th*, 1872.

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

With respect to literary pensions I think it was the intention of parliament that they should be given to really distinguished literary men. I need not name the great instances in which this practice has been pursued. Gradually the standard seems to have declined; in part no doubt because the endowment supplied by public approbation is now, as a general rule, materially improved. An article in the *Quarterly Review* recently exhibited (perhaps with exaggeration) the insignificance of many recent recipients. Since assuming my present office I have found that it was necessary, in practice, to recognise loss of health, old age or calamity, as elements in the case for pensions of this class; but I have endeavoured to limit this admission to those cases only where some real service had been rendered, by works of intrinsic value, to the cause of letters. I am afraid upon enquiry that this case may not be up to the mark according to this rule. I am constantly refusing applications where personal character, undoubted need, and *respectable* authorship are combined. The pension list would I fear become a source of mischief were it made available for this class. All this, because I am desirous you should understand that the application you have sent me is not treated lightly. Minor aid, I may add, is sometimes given from another fund, by small grants not annual; and in these cases the standard of literary merit is not lifted quite so high.

Yours very sincerely,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

P. S. Be assured we are all ears and eyes and thought too I hope in the American matter.

Lady Charlotte Locker died suddenly; and my father wrote to Mr Locker:

FARRINGFORD,
*April 28th*, 1872.

I scarcely dare to write. The shock must have been so terrible, just when things seemed better. I would we could know how you have borne it. Sure at least I am that, even in this first anguish of grief, you can think with thankfulness that the weary days of suffering are over for ever with your dearest one, and can trust that she is happy now with the God and Saviour she has loved and served. May He strengthen you to bear your immeasurable loss. Is there not even in its greatness, that which helps to make it bearable? Had she been less a creature of light and love, you could not have had the beautiful memory, or the sustaining help you now have.

Vain words all, I know: forgive them as all that one poor human sympathy can do at such an hour.

When you are able to come to us, and it will be good for you to come, you must come. We will do all the little we can for you you know, with all true love.

Ever your affectionate

ALFRED AND EMILY TENNYSON.

*June 22nd.* Farringford. Every night A. has read Shakespeare, or Pascal, or Montesquieu (*Décadence des Romains*).

On July 9th A. went to London about "Gareth," and wrote: "I have sent 'Gareth[1]' to press this morning. The MS is so ill-written that I expect much confusion."

[1] On April 5th my father had written to Mr Knowles (then Editor of the *Contemporary Review*): "'Gareth' is not finished yet. I left him off once altogether, finding him more difficult to deal with than anything excepting perhaps 'Aylmer's Field.' If I were at liberty, which I think I am not, to print the names of the speakers 'Gareth' 'Linette' over the short snip-snap of their talk, and so avoid the perpetual 'said' and its varieties, the work would be much easier. I have made out the plan however, and

*Aug. 7th.* We went to Paris. A. said that the hollow eyes of the ruined Tuileries looked out very ironically, with "Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité" written above them. The maid at the Hôtel St Romain gave us a pitiful account of her living through the siege, half-starved, for four months in the cellars. A. and the boys spent the day in the Louvre. He told the boys that in 1848 he saw two Englishmen come to look at the Venus of Milo. They were discussing Peel and the corn laws. "This is the finest statue in the whole world." "Yes, but about Peel now," and so back they went to the corn laws, and the "finest statue in the world" was left unheeded. He immensely admired the portraits by Velasquez with a far-away look in the eyes: and Titian's Entombment.

He bought and read many volumes of Victor Hugo and Alfred de Musset. He praised the *Chasseur Noir.* Alfred de Musset's *On ne badine pas avec l'amour* and his other comedies were favourites of A.'s[1].

*Aug. 14th.* To Dijon, thence to Mâcon and Vienne.

We drove along the valley of the Isère to Grenoble, and A. said, "This is our best day." A magic, dreamy light on the crags which stretched far away into the distance. Beneath were vines, and fruit-trees, and full crops. From Grenoble we drove to Sassenaye.

*Aug. 21st.* Grenoble. A. and Lionel went to the Chartreuse Monastery, a splendid drive by the side of a torrent. A. told me to read Victor Hugo's *Burgraves.* He wanted to know what I thought of the "strange confusion of times." There seems to me something fine in the ideas, though. Uther Pendragon is out of place.

At midnight mass A. and Lionel had a dim view of the two chanting lines of white cowled monks each with his little lantern. This nightly service had gone on for hundreds of years, and is very solemn and affecting. A good dinner was served, no charge was made, and A. and L. were waited on by a silent monk with courtly bearing; "a great gentleman," A. said, "who looked as if

perhaps some day it will be completed; and it will be then to consider whether or no it should go into the *Contemporary* or elsewhere." "Gareth" was published by Strahan in the autumn (1872) along with "The Last Tournament."

[1] My father was fond (about this time) of dipping into French history; Thierry, Thiers, Lavallée, Montalembert, Michelet, Guizot, Lanfrey.

he had been a distinguished officer in the French army." Next day the Procureur showed them over the Monastery, which is bare and stern, and every now and then opened the doors of the cells. A. inquired if any of the monks kept skeletons or skulls to remind them of their mortality. The Procureur shook his head.

*Aug. 29th.* A. and Lionel climbed the Dent du Chat, more than 6000 feet high. They had a beautiful view of Mont Blanc, A. saying it "looked like a great cathedral with three naves." The guide approved of his powers of endurance, and called both father and son good mountaineers.

*Sept. 2nd.* Geneva. A. took me to the meeting of the rivers, "the clear stream with the muddy one." When the night deepened (as he and I had noticed at Cauteretz and elsewhere) the rushing of the Rhone sounded louder and louder.

*Sept. 5th.* Returned by Lausanne and Amiens to Aldworth. A. read *Le Lendemain de la Mort* on the way.

On our return we found the following letter from Walt Whitman:

WASHINGTON, *Sept. 2nd*, 1872.

DEAR MR TENNYSON,

After a long absence in the mountains and lakes of Vermont and Northern New York I am now back again at work and expect to remain here. Your letter of May 23rd, also the one with the picture[1], safely reached me. The picture is superb and I consider myself in luck possessing it. It brings you very near me. I have it now before me.

I send you by same mail with this in a little book my piece lately delivered for Dartmouth College Commencement up North. Did *Democratic Vistas* reach you?

We have had in this country a summer more fit for the infernal regions, but now the delicious Virginia September has set in balmy cool and one dilates and feels like work again.

With best respects and love,

WALT WHITMAN.

[1] The frontispiece of Vol. II.

*Sept. 24th.* Aldworth. A. sent off corrections of "Gareth" to the press. His lines on the honeysuckle in "Gareth" were made on the lawn about the honeysuckle that climbs up the house at Aldworth.

> Good lord, how sweetly smells the honeysuckle
> In the hush'd night, as if the world were one
> Of utter peace, and love, and gentleness.

He finished *Coriolanus* to us, which he reads dramatically and magnificently.

*Oct. 7th.* Alan and Mary Ker (A.'s sister) and Walter Ker their son arrived. A. chaffed Mary about her sonnet-writing.

He said to her: "This is the sort of sonnet you would write to Swedenborg," then, without drawing breath, he spouted a sonnet, and at the end observed, "There is a sonnet with the most intricate rhymes, and now I do not remember a word of it." Many of his shorter poems were made like this, in a flash.

*Oct. 29th.* A. went to Clapham.

## *My father's letter-diary.*

*Oct. 31st.* The Hollies. I believe we are going to the theatre to-night to see "Bijou" which is great as a "spectacle." Gassiot, with whom I dined the day before yesterday, has a great voltaic battery and he showed us wonderful lights. K. is going to 'interview' Strahan about Charles' sonnets. Strahan has joined himself to King.

*Nov. 1st.* I have not set eyes on the Canada paragraph, but Knowles, who has gone off to Brighton to-day, says he will get it for me. I saw "Bijou" last night, and was ashamed of my countrymen flocking to such a wretched nonentity, miserable stagey-toned, unmeaning dialogue: only one thing made amends, a young damsel whose dancing was music and poetry. By the

bye I read in the bill that one of the actresses was Miss Tennyson. I think it is a fancy name assumed by her. I have not yet got my sheets back from the printer.

*Nov. 4th.* I called on Carlyle yesterday but he was out.

*Nov. 6th.* I haven't seen Palgrave yet or Woolner. K. has asked Pollock to dinner to-morrow, and Mr King the publisher, who once visited at Farringford, is coming. I have not written to Browning yet or seen him, but must one or other. I am trying to write a war song for the knights in the first "Idyll."

*November 8th.* Lady Franklin has sent me that Canadian bit of the *Times*[1]. Villainous.

*November 10th.* It seems to me all right for the knights going forth to break the heathen[2]. It is early times yet, and many years are to elapse before the more settled time of "Gareth." I must say that to me the song rings like a grand music. An article in the *Spectator* on Twickenham where Hallam is mentioned.

*November 11th.* I think of coming home on Wednesday, for I stop for the "Metaphysical" on Tuesday.

*November 13th.* There are several reasons why I cannot fulfil my promise of coming to-day,—one is

[1] In answer to this article he wrote:

> And that true North, whereof we lately heard
> A strain to shame us "keep you to yourselves;
> So loyal is too costly! friends—your love
> Is but a burthen; loose the bond, and go."
> Is this the tone of empire? here the faith
> That made us rulers? this, indeed, her voice
> And meaning, whom the roar of Hougoumont
> Left mightiest of all peoples under heaven? etc.
>
> Epilogue to the "Idylls of the King."

[2] Referring to the war-song "Clang battle-axe, and clash brand! Let the King reign."

I must go to my rooms in Victoria Street[1] and put things in order, as I have to vacate at the end of the year, and there are others. Archbishop Manning thanked me warmly last night for "Gareth," and I sat by Father Dalgairns, whom I gratified by telling of my wife's approval of his essay on God.

A poem arrived from Dr W. C. Bennett which was acknowledged as follows:

*Nov. 13th*, 1872.

MY DEAR MR BENNETT,

Thanks for your flattering poem. I could wish that I had something of what Master Swinburne calls "the Divine arrogance of genius," that I might take it into my system and rejoice abundantly; but as Marvell says:

> "At my back I always hear
> Time's winged chariot hurrying near;
> And yonder all before us lie
> Deserts of vast eternity,"

where most of us will be left and swallowed up. Nevertheless, true thanks.

Yours ever, A. TENNYSON.

*My mother's journal.*

*Dec. 25th.* A. thought of writing a poem about a shipwreck on the Yorkshire coast, which Lord Houghton had described to him. One mid-winter a stranded vessel was found near Redcar; women tied to the masts with men's coats thrown round their shoulders, and the sailors lying about the decks; all of them, men and women, frozen to death. The name of the ship was "The Happy Home."

[1] Rooms in Albert Mansions which my father took (1870–1872) in order to be, during his visits to London, near his friends, Dean Stanley and Lady Augusta Stanley, and Frederick and Lady Charlotte Locker.

I have copied out for press the "Epilogue to the Idylls" he has just written: "O loyal to the royal in thyself." A. burnt with indignation and shame at one eminent statesman saying to him, "Would to God Canada would go!"

There was the usual Christmas letter from Edward Fitzgerald:

WOODBRIDGE, *Dec. 30th*, 1872.

To make amends for the audacious remarks I made, I transcribe what poor Savile Morton wrote to me.

"When I look into Alfred's poems, I am astonished at the size of the words and the thoughts. No man clothes an idea in language at once so apt, and so full of strength, music and dignity. Were a poet to be judged by single lines, I am not sure he would not deserve the first place among them all. How many of the lines of 'Locksley Hall' are perfect as a Sicilian tetradrachm, which is esteem'd the most beautiful of all coins, so round, so chisell'd, and of the purest metal. Virgil's *Georgics* have also the same perfection. Like Alfred's his lines coil themselves up in the mind.

I am satisfied that Goethe wanted the burning impressions of Tennyson on the mind, which rap the poet into the lyrical heaven. He was rarely impassioned; his nature was for most part a cold, classifying, methodical one, fitter for a philosopher than a poet."

There, Sir, is something for wife and son to read and *keep*, if they please. I lit upon it the other day in a MS vol. of quotations from Morton's letters, all so good that I have wanted to get someone to put them in some magazine, but, of course, no one will do as I ask.

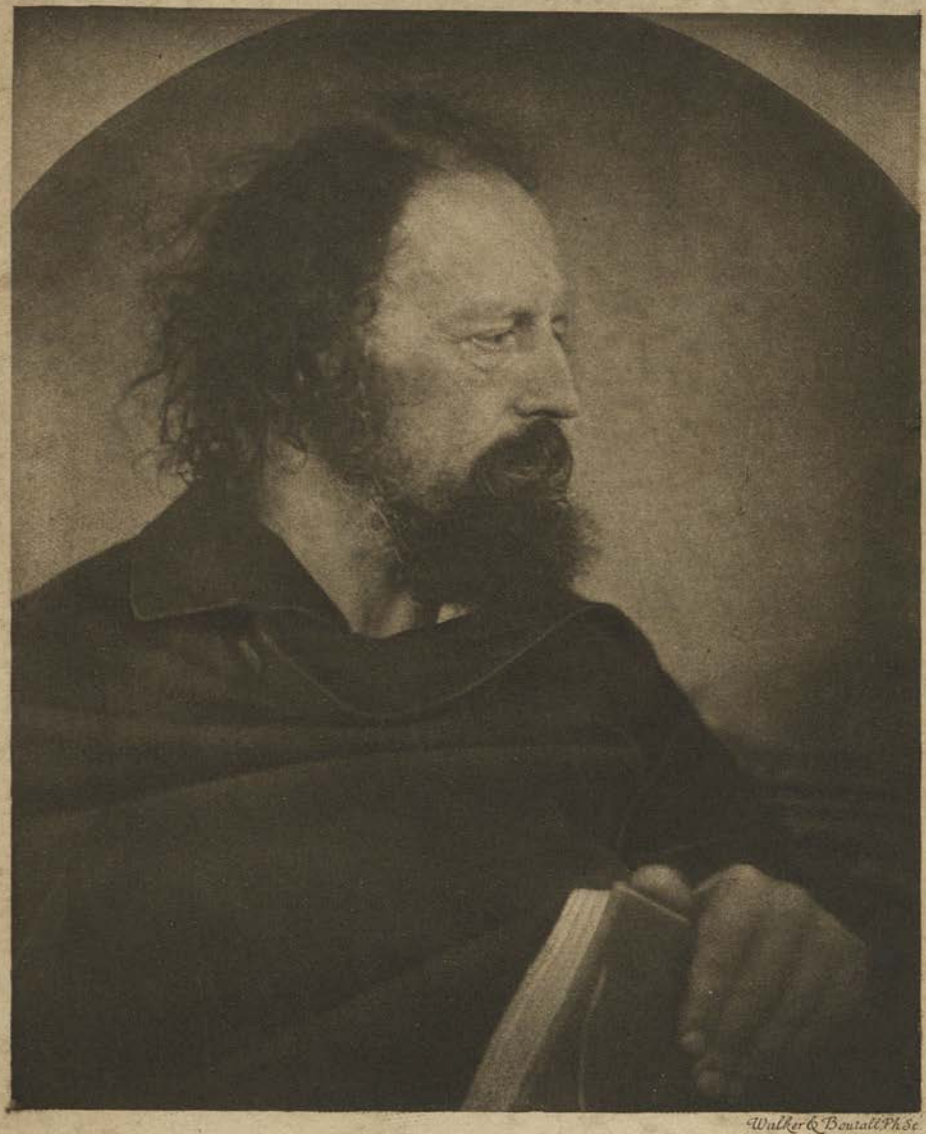
Believe me hers and yours always,

E. F. G.

To my father's favourite Library Edition (1872), published by Strahan, were added during this year the two early sonnets "Alexander" and "The Bridesmaid," also "The Third of February, 1852," "Literary Squabbles," "On a Spiteful Letter," and the "Epilogue" to the

"Idylls of the King." He was asked to publish his vigorous answer to the attack made upon him by Lytton Bulwer (in 1847), but he would not comply with the request. "Let those wretched literary squabbles be forgotten." Spiteful attacks irritated him, for, as he would explain, "I hate spite: I am black-blooded like all the Tennysons. I remember all the malignant things said against me, but little of the praise." In his later years, when he was attacked, these moods of irritation were very rare, and he would quote his own lines:

> Surely, after all,
> The noblest answer unto such
> Is perfect stillness when they brawl.



Walker & Boutall Ph. Sc.

*Alfred Tennyson.*

*from the photograph by Mrs. Julia Margaret Cameron.*

# CHAPTER V.

## "THE IDYLLS OF THE KING," AND "BALIN AND BALAN."

> For an ye heard a music, like enow
> They are building still, seeing the city is built
> To music, therefore never built at all,
> And therefore built for ever.

With the publication of "Gareth and Lynette", in 1872 my father thought that he had completed the cycle of the "Idylls"; but later he felt that some further introduction to "Merlin and Vivien" was necessary, and so wrote "Balin and Balan."

From his earliest years he had written out in prose various histories of Arthur. His prefatory MS note about the historical Arthur is: "He lived about 500 A.D. and defeated his enemies in a pitched battle in the Welsh kingdom of Strathclyde: and the earliest allusions to him are to be found in the Welsh bards of the seventh century. In the twelfth century Geoffrey of Monmouth collected the legends about him as an European conqueror in his *History of the Britons:* and translated them from Celtic into Latin[1]. The *Morte d'Arthur* by Sir Thomas Malory was printed by Caxton in 1485." On Malory, and later, on Lady Charlotte Guest's translation of the *Mabinogion*, and on his own imagination, my father said

[1] Wace translated them into French and added the story of the Round Table.

that he chiefly founded his epic; he has made the old legends his own, restored the idealism, and infused into them a spirit of modern thought and an ethical significance, setting his characters in a rich and varied landscape; as indeed otherwise these archaic stories would not have appealed to the modern world at large.

In 1832 appeared the first of the Arthurian poems in the form of a lyric, "The Lady of Shalott" (another version of the story of Lancelot and Elaine), and this was followed in 1842 by the other lyrics, "Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere" (partly if not wholly written in 1830), and "Sir Galahad."

The 1842 volume also contained the "Morte d'Arthur," which now forms part of the "Passing of Arthur."

The earliest fragment of an epic that I can find among my father's MSS in my possession was probably written about 1833, and is a sketch in prose. I give it as it stands.

*King Arthur.*

On the latest limit of the West in the land of Lyonnesse, where, save the rocky Isles of Scilly, all is now wild sea, rose the sacred Mount of Camelot. It rose from the deeps with gardens and bowers and palaces, and at the top of the Mount was King Arthur's hall, and the holy Minster with the Cross of gold. Here dwelt the King in glory apart, while the Saxons whom he had overthrown in twelve battles ravaged the land, and ever came nearer and nearer.

The Mount was the most beautiful in the world, sometimes green and fresh in the beam of morning, sometimes all one splendour, folded in the golden mists of the West. But all underneath it was hollow, and the mountain trembled, when the seas rushed bellowing through the porphyry caves; and there ran

K. A. Religious Faith

King Arthur's three Guineveres

The Lady of the Lake?

two Guineveres. ye first prim Xy. 2d Roman Catholicism. ye first is put away & dwells apart. 2d Guinevere flies. Arthur takes to the first again but finds her changed by lapse of Time

Modred the sceptical understanding. he pulls Guinevere Arthur's latest wife from the throne.

Merlin Emrys the enchanter. Scies ie marries his daughter to Modred.

Excalibur war.

the sea. the people } the S. are a seapeople
the Saxons the people. } & it is theirs & a type of them.

the Round table liberal institutions

Battle of Camlan.

—

2 Guinevere with the enchanted book & cup

NOTES FOR "THE IDYLLS OF THE KING"

*From an Original MS., about* 1833

a prophecy that the mountain and the city on some wild morning would topple into the abyss and be no more.

It was night. The King sat in his Hall. Beside him sat the sumptuous Guinevere and about him were all his lords and knights of the Table Round. There they feasted, and when the feast was over the Bards sang to the King's glory.

---

The following memorandum was presented by my father to Mr Knowles at Aldworth on October 1, 1869, who told him that it was between thirty and forty years old. It was probably written at the same time as the fragment which I have just quoted. However the allegorical drift here marked out was fundamentally changed in the later scheme of the "Idylls."

K. A. Religious Faith.

King Arthur's three Guineveres.

The Lady of the Lake.

Two Guineveres. y^e^ first prim. Christianity. 2^d^ Roman Catholicism. y^e^ first is put away and dwells apart. 2^d^ Guinevere flies. Arthur takes to the first again but finds her changed by lapse of Time.

Modred, the sceptical understanding. He pulls Guinevere, Arthur's latest wife, from the throne.

Merlin Emrys, the enchanter. Science. Marries his daughter to Modred.

Excalibur, war.

The sea, the people.
The Saxons, the people.
} the S. are a sea-people and it is theirs and a type of them.

The Round Table: liberal institutions.

Battle of Camlan.

2^d^ Guinevere with the enchanted book and cup.

Before 1840 it is evident that my father wavered between casting the Arthurian legends into the form of an epic or into that of a musical masque; for in one of his 1833-1840 MS books there is the following first rough draft of a scenario, into which the Lancelot and Elaine scenes were afterwards introduced.

*First Act.*

Sir Mordred and his party. Mordred inveighs against the King and the Round Table. The knights, and the quest. Mordred scoffs at the Ladies of the Lake, doubts whether they are supernatural beings, etc. Mordred's cringing interview with Guinevere. Mordred and the Lady of the Lake. Arthur lands in Albyn.

*Second Act.*

Lancelot's embassy and Guinevere. The Lady of the Lake meets Arthur and endeavours to persuade him not to fight with Sir Mordred. Arthur will not be moved from his purpose. Lamentation of the Lady of the Lake. Elaine. Marriage of Arthur.

*Third Act.*

Oak tomb of Merlin. The song of Nimue. Sir Mordred comes to consult Merlin. Coming away meets Arthur. Their fierce dialogue. Arthur consults Sir L. and Sir Bedivere. Arthur weeps over Merlin and is reproved by Nimue, who inveighs against Merlin. Arthur asks Merlin the issue of the battle. Merlin will not enlighten him. Nimue requests Arthur to question Merlin again. Merlin tells him he shall bear rule again, but that the Ladies of the Lake can return no more. Guinevere throws away the diamonds into the river. The Court and the dead Elaine.

*Fourth Act.*

Discovery by Mordred and Nimue of Lancelot and Guinevere. Arthur and Guinevere's meeting and parting.

*Fifth Act.*

The battle. Chorus of the Ladies of the Lake. The throwing away of Excalibur and departure of Arthur.

---

After this my father began to study the epical King Arthur in earnest. He had travelled in Wales, and meditated a tour in Cornwall. He thought, read, talked about King Arthur. He made a poem on Lancelot's quest of the San Graal; "in as good verse," he said, "as I ever wrote—no, I did not write, I made it in my head, and it has altogether slipt out of memory[1]." What he called "the greatest of all poetical subjects" perpetually haunted him. But it was not till 1855 that he determined upon the final shape of the poem, and not until 1859 that he published the first instalment, "Enid[2]," "Vivien," "Elaine," "Guinevere." In spite of the public applause he did not rush headlong into the other "Idylls of the King," although he had carried a more or less perfected scheme of them in his head over thirty years. For one thing, he did not consider that the time was ripe. In addition to this, he did not find himself in the proper mood to write them, and he never could work except at what his heart impelled him to do.—Then, however, he devoted himself with all his energies and with infinite enthusiasm to that work alone.

[1] Letter from my father to the Duke of Argyll, 1859.

[2] He found out that the "E" in "Enid" was pronounced short (as if it were spelt 'Ennid'), and so altered the phrase in the proofs "wedded Enid" to "married Enid."

Had married Enid, Yniol's only child.

He also gave some other reasons for pausing in the production of the "Idylls." "One," he wrote, "is because I could hardly light upon a finer close than that ghost-like passing away of the King" (in "Guinevere"), although the "Morte d'Arthur" was the natural close. The second was that he was not sure he could keep up to the same high level throughout the remaining "Idylls." "I have thought about it," he writes in 1862, "and arranged all the intervening 'Idylls,' but I dare not set to work for fear of a failure and time lost." The third was, to give it in his own words, "I doubt whether such a subject as the San Graal could be handled in these days without incurring a charge of irreverence. It would be too much like playing with sacred things." "The Holy Grail" however later on seemed to come suddenly, as if by a breath of inspiration; and that volume was given to the world in 1869, containing (see previous chapter) "The Coming of Arthur," "The Holy Grail," "Pelleas and Ettarre," and "The Passing of Arthur."

In 1871 "The Last Tournament" was privately printed, and then published in the *Contemporary Review*: republished with "Gareth and Lynette" in 1872. These with "Balin and Balan" (published in 1885) make up the "twelve books,"—the number mentioned in the Introduction to the "Morte d'Arthur."

In 1870 an article on the "Idylls" by Dean Alford, the old college friend of Arthur Hallam and of my father, came out in the *Contemporary*: an able letter also by J. T. Knowles appeared in the *Spectator*[1]. These reviews my father considered the best[2]. But in later years he often said, "They have taken my hobby, and ridden

[1] See *Contemporary Review*, May, 1873.

[2] Mr Knowles writes to me: "He encouraged me to write a short paper, in the form of a letter to the *Spectator*, on the inner meaning of the whole poem, which I did, simply upon the lines he himself indicated. He often said, however, that an allegory should never be pressed too far."

it too hard, and have explained some things too allegorically, although there is an allegorical or perhaps rather a parabolic drift in the poem." "Of course Camelot for instance, a city of shadowy palaces, is everywhere symbolic of the gradual growth of human beliefs and institutions, and of the spiritual development of man. Yet there is no single fact or incident in the 'Idylls,' however seemingly mystical, which cannot be explained as without any mystery or allegory whatever." The Bishop of Ripon (Boyd Carpenter) once asked him whether they were right who interpreted the three Queens, who accompanied King Arthur on his last voyage, as Faith, Hope and Charity. He answered: "They are right, and they are not right. They mean that and they do not. They are three of the noblest of women. They are also those three Graces, but they are much more. I hate to be tied down to say, '*This* means *that*,' because the thought within the image is much more than any one interpretation."

As for the many meanings of the poem my father would affirm, "Poetry is like shot-silk with many glancing colours. Every reader must find his own interpretation according to his ability, and according to his sympathy with the poet." The general drift of the "Idylls" is clear enough. "The whole," he said, "is the dream of man coming into practical life and ruined by one sin. Birth is a mystery and death is a mystery, and in the midst lies the tableland of life, and its struggles and performances. It is not the history of one man or of one generation but of a whole cycle of generations." Dean Alford writes,

> One noble design warms and unites the whole. In Arthur's coming—his foundation of the Round Table—his struggles and disappointments, and departure—we see the conflict continually maintained between the spirit and the flesh; and in the

pragmatical issue, we recognize the bearing down in history and in individual man of pure and lofty Christian purpose by the lusts of the flesh, by the corruptions of superstition, by human passions and selfishness.

Yet in spite of the ebbs and flows in the tide of human affairs, in spite of the temporary bearing down of the pure and lofty purpose, the author has carefully shadowed forth the spiritual progress and advance of the world, and has enshrined man's highest hopes in this new-old legend, crowning with a poet's prophetic vision the vague and disjointed dreams of a bygone age.

About the characterization Knowles says: "As the pages are turned over...and as name after name again catches the eye, one is newly struck by the abundant and *dramatic* variety of the men and women moving to and fro! All, as before said, are *alive* and recognisable at a glance, at the sound as it were of their voices." This seems to me true. Lancelot the "noblest brother and the truest man," Tristram the bold and careless hunter, Galahad the pure, unearthly knight, Bors the blunt and honest, Bedivere the warm-hearted, all have been to me from boyhood living personalities, natural human characters, each with some dominant trait; and the allegorical (if alone accepted) would be to me the death-warrant of many an old friend.

"The vision of Arthur as I have drawn him," my father said, "had come upon me when, little more than a boy, I first lighted upon Malory[1]"; and it dwelt with him to the end; and we may perhaps say that now the completed poem, regarded as a whole, gives his innermost being more fully, though not more truly, than "In Memoriam." He felt himself justified in having always pictured Arthur as the ideal man by such passages as this from Joseph of Exeter: "The old world knows not his peer, nor will

[1] My father's MS.

the future show us his equal: he alone towers over other kings, better than the past ones and greater than those that are to be." So this from Alberic,

"Hic jacet Arturus, flos regum, gloria regni,
Quem probitas morum commendat laude perenni."

And this from the *Brut ab Arthur*, "In short God has not made since Adam was, the man more perfect than Arthur."

My father felt strongly that only under the inspiration of ideals, and with his "sword bathed in heaven," can a man combat the cynical indifference, the intellectual selfishness, the sloth of will, the utilitarian materialism of a transition age. "Poetry is truer than fact[1]" he would say. Guided by the voice within, the Ideal Soul looks out into the Infinite for the highest Ideal; and finds it nowhere realized so mightily as in the Word who "wrought With human hands the creed of creeds." But for Arthur, as for everyone who believes in the Word however interpreted, arises the question, "How can I in my little life, in my small measure, and in my limited sphere reflect this highest Ideal?" From the answer to this question come the strength of life, its beauty, and above all its helpfulness to the world.

On the other hand, having this vision of Arthur, my father thought that perhaps he had not made the real humanity of the King sufficiently clear in his epilogue; so he inserted in 1891, as his last correction, "Ideal manhood closed in real man," before the lines:

Rather than that gray king, whose name, a ghost,
Streams like a cloud, man-shaped, from mountain peak,
And cleaves to cairn and cromlech still.

[1] In this phrase he expressed what Matthew Arnold has said somewhat differently, that "Poetry is the reality, philosophy the illusion."

Gladstone says[1]:

We know not where to look in history or in letters for a nobler or more overpowering conception of man as he might be, than in the Arthur of this volume. Wherever he appears, it is as the great pillar of the moral order, and the resplendent top of human excellence. But even he only reaches to his climax in these two really wonderful speeches (at the end of "Guinevere"). They will not bear mutilation: they must be read, and pondered, to be known.

To sum up: if Epic unity is looked for in the "Idylls," we find it not in the wrath of an Achilles, nor in the wanderings of an Ulysses, but in the unending war of humanity in all ages,—the world-wide war of Sense and Soul, typified in individuals, with the subtle interaction of character upon character, the central dominant figure being the pure, generous, tender, brave, human-hearted Arthur,—so that the links (with here and there symbolic accessories) which bind the "Idylls" into an artistic whole, are perhaps somewhat intricate[2].

My father would explain that the great resolve (to ennoble and spiritualize mankind) is kept so long as all work in obedience to the highest and holiest law within them: in those days when all the court is one Utopia:

The King will follow Christ, and we the King,
In whom High God has breathed a secret thing.

Thus in "Gareth"[3] the "joy of life in steepness overcome, And victories of ascent," lives in the eternal

[1] *Gleanings of Past Years*, Vol. II. p. 166.

[2] Edmund Lushington called the "Idylls of the King" "Epylls of the King." According to him they were little Epics (not Idylls) woven into an Epical unity, but my father disliked the sound of the word "Epylls."

[3] The epitome which follows is a summary of the chief points on which my father would dwell.

youth of goodness. But in the later "Idylls" the allowed sin not only poisons the spring of life in the sinner, but spreads its poison through the whole community. In some natures, even among those who would "rather die than doubt," it breeds suspicion and want of trust in God and man. Some loyal souls are wrought to madness against the world. Others, and some among the highest intellects, become the slaves of the evil which is at first half-disdained. Tender natures sink under the blight, that which is of the highest in them working their death. And in some, as faith declines, religion turns from practical goodness and holiness to superstition:

This madness has come on us for our sin.

These seek relief in selfish spiritual excitement, not remembering that man's duty is to forget self in the service of others, and to let visions come and go, and that so only will they see "The Holy Thing." In the Idyll of "Pelleas and Ettarre" selfishness has turned to open crime; it is "the breaking of the storm"; nevertheless Pelleas still honours his sacred vow to the King and spares the wrong-doers. Whereas in "The Last Tournament" the wrong-doer "suffers his doom," and "is cloven thro' the brain." We have here the deadly proof of the kinship of all wilful sin in murder following adultery in closest relation of cause and consequence,—the prelude of the final act of the tragedy which culminates in the temporary triumph of evil, the confusion of moral order, closing in the great "Battle of the West."

Throughout the poem runs my father's belief in one strong argument of hope, the marvellously transmuting power of repentance in all men, however great their sin:

As children learn, be thou
Wiser for falling.

The lost one found was greeted as in Heaven.

> Have ye look'd
> At Edyrn? Have ye seen how nobly changed?
> This work of his is great and wonderful,
> His very face with change of heart is changed.

So of Guinevere's repentance and the King's forgiveness: so too of the repentance of Lancelot, whose innocent worship of beauty had turned into the "guilty love," and of whom we are told that he died a "holy man." But repentance could not avert the doom of the Round Table. The "last dim weird battle" my father would quote as some of his best work, and would allow that it was a "presentment of human death" as well as of the overthrow of the "old order":

> And ev'n on Arthur fell
> Confusion, since he saw not whom he fought.
> For friend and foe were shadows in the mist,
> And friend slew friend not knowing whom he slew;
> * * * * *

ending with the lines:

> And rolling far along the gloomy shores
> The voice of days of old and days to be.

And he liked to read the last passage in "The Passing of Arthur," that one when Arthur himself finds the comfort of the faith with which he comforted Bedivere in his passing "from the great deep to the great deep"—for the individual man may seem to fail in his purpose, but his work cannot die—

> The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
> And God fulfils himself in many ways;

and that other, when Bedivere hears from the dawn, the East, whence have sprung all the great religions, the

triumph of welcome given to him who has proved himself "more than conqueror":

> As from beyond the limit of the world,
> Like the last echo born of a great cry,
> Sounds, as if some fair city were one voice
> Around a king returning from his wars[1].

My father made this further manuscript note on another phase of the unity of the poem. "The Coming of Arthur is on the night of the New Year; when he is wedded 'the world is white with May'; on a summer night the vision of the Holy Grail appears; and the 'Last Tournament' is in the 'yellowing autumn-tide.' Guinevere flees thro' the mists of autumn, and Arthur's death takes place at midnight in mid-winter. The form of the 'Coming of Arthur' and of the 'Passing' is purposely more archaic than that of the other 'Idylls.'"

Concerning the love of Nature, shown especially in the metaphors and similes, Gladstone has a remarkable passage:

"Nowhere could we more opportunely than at this point call attention to Mr Tennyson's extraordinary felicity and force in the use of metaphor and simile.

This gift appears to have grown with his years, alike in abundance, truth and grace. As the showers descend from heaven to return to it in vapour, so Mr Tennyson's loving observation of Nature and his Muse seem to have had a compact of reciprocity well kept on both

[1] "Elaine," "Guinevere," "The Holy Grail," and "The Passing of Arthur," were his favourite "Idylls" for reading aloud: he would show that throughout each of the twelve "Idylls" his blank verse varied according to his subject. If he differentiated his style from that of any other poet, he would remark on his use of English—in preference to words derived from French and Latin. He revived many fine old words which had fallen into disuse: and I heard him regret that he had never employed the word "yarely."

sides. * * * Sometimes applying the metaphors of Art to Nature, he more frequently draws the materials of his analogies from her unexhausted book, and however often he may call for some new and beautiful vehicle of illustration, she seems never to withhold an answer. With regard to this particular and very critical gift, it seems to us that he may challenge comparison with almost any poet, either of ancient or modern times[1]."

Most explanations and analyses, although eagerly asked for by some readers, appeared to my father somewhat to dwarf and limit the life and scope of the great Arthurian tragedy; and therefore I will add no more, except what Jowett wrote in 1893: "Tennyson has made the Arthur legend a great revelation of human experience, and of the thoughts of many hearts."

Some passages of the "Idylls" were first written in prose: and I find among his manuscripts prose-sketches for part of "The Holy Grail," "Pelleas and Ettarre," "Gareth and Lynette," and for "Balin and Balan." I give as a specimen the last-mentioned, which he dictated to Mr Knowles, almost without a pause.

### *The "Dolorous Stroke."*

There came a rumour to the King of two knights who sat beside a fountain near Camelot, and had challenged every knight that passed, and overthrown them. These things were told the King, and early one morning the spirit of his youth returned upon him, and he armed himself, and rode out till he came to the fountain, and there sat two knights, Balin and Balan;

[1] Gladstone's *Gleanings*, Vol. II. p. 159. Jowett wrote: "Tennyson may be said to have *always* lived in the presence of Nature."

and the fountain bubbled out among hart's-tongue and lady-fern, and on one side of the fountain sat Balan and on the other side sat Balin, and on the right of Balan was a poplar-tree, and on the left of Balin was an alder-tree, and the horse of Balan was tied to the poplar tree, and the horse of Balin to the alder-tree. And Arthur said, "Fair sirs, what do ye here?" And they said, "We sit here for the sake of glory, and we be better knights than any of those in Arthur's hall, and that have we proven, for we have overthrown every knight that came forth against us." And Arthur said, "I am of his hall; see, therefore, whether me also ye can overthrow." And Arthur lightly smote either of them down, and returned, and no man knew it.

Then that same day he sent for Balan and Balin, and when they were brought before him he asked them, saying, "Answer ye me this question: who be ye?" And Balin said, "I am Balin the savage, and that name was given to me, seeing that once in mine anger I smote with my gauntlet an unarmed man in thy hall and slew him, whereupon thou didst banish me for three years from thy court as one unworthy of being of thy table. But I yearn for the light of thy presence, and the three years are nigh fulfilled, and I have repented me of the deed that was unknightly; and so it seemed to me that if I sat by yon fountain and challenged and overthrew every knight that passed thou wouldst receive me again into thy favour. And this is my brother Balan, not yet a knight of thine."

Which when the King heard and saw that he had indeed repented him, he received him again and made his brother Balan knight. And the new knight demanded the first quest. And there came one into Arthur's hall, and Balan rode away with him.

And as Balin moved about the court he marvelled at the knightliness and the manhood of Sir Lancelot, and

at the worship he ever gave the Queen, and the honour in which the Queen held him. Then he thought within himself, "Surely it is this Queen's grace and nobleness which have made him such a name among men, wherefore I too will worship the Queen an I may. And I will forget my former violences and will live anew, and I will pray the King to grant me to bear some cognisance of the Queen in the stead of mine own shield."

And Arthur said, "Ask thou my Queen what token she will give thee, and wear thou that." And he was bold, and asked for the Queen's crown to wear upon his shield, and that he would amend himself, under the lustre thereof, of his old violence. So she turned her to the King and smiled and asked him, and the King said, "Yea, so that thereby he may be holpen to amend himself." And Balin said, "The sight hereof shall evermore be bit and rein to all my savage heats." Then Balin ever hovered about Lancelot and the Queen, so that he might espy in what things stood truest knighthood and courtesy toward women. Anon he came to wonder how so great a tenderness of love might be between two such as were not lover and damosel, but ever thrust away from him such thought as a shadow from his own old life. Yet he grew somewhat gloomy of heart and presently took his shield and arms and rode privily away to seek adventure.

So, many days, he traversed the thick forests, till he came upon the ancient castle of King Pelles, and there they said to him, "Why wearest thou this crown royal on thy shield?" and he answered them, "Because the noblest and the chastest of all ladies hath granted me to wear it." So at the high banquet in the hall sat one Sir Garlon, who likewise said, "Why wearest thou a Queen's crown royal?" Unto him Sir Balin made the same answer. Whereat Sir Garlon grimly smiled and said, "Art thou so simple, and hast yet come but now, as thou

sayest, from the court? Hast thou not eyes, or at the least ears, and dost not know the thing that standeth (shame that groweth) between Lancelot and the Queen?" To which Sir Balin fiercely answered, "Yea surely, because I have both eyes and ears and because I have diligently used them to learn how he, the greatest of all knights, doth gain his valour from the noblest of all ladies, I know that such a thing as this thou sayest is but a foul thing and a felon's talk." But none the less Sir Garlon's talk made him full heavy and gloomy of heart, so that he wandered to and fro among the churls, and there heard marvellous tales. For they told him that Sir Garlon rode invisible and had wounded unto death many strong and good knights, striking them through the back, and they warned him to beware of Sir Garlon.

Also they told him how that King Pelles was the true descendant of Joseph of Arimathea, and also how in hidden chambers of the castle lay wondrous treasures from the days of our Lord Christ—even the spear which ever bled since Longus smote our Lord withal, and many more such marvels, till Sir Balin doubted him whether he could believe aught that they told him of Sir Garlon or aught else. But on the morrow when Sir Garlon met him by the Castle walls and mocked him, saying, "Still then thou wearest that shameful token—that crown scandalous," then did Sir Balin's old nature break through its new crust, and he smote him on the helmet with his sword. But though he overthrew and left him lying, yet his sword was broken into diverse pieces, so that he cast the handle from him, and ran hastily to find some other weapon. For by now he saw men running upon him from the castle, and thought but to flee and to fight for his life. And as he fled he saw within a loophole window where a stack of spears lay piled, and burst the door and caught the tallest of them all, and, crying to his

war-horse, leaped upon him and departed. And as he went he heard the voice of King Pelles to his knights: "Stay, stay him: he defileth holy things beyond his wit to know of." But being hot and fleet with madness he plunged far into the woods, and drew no rein until his horse was nigh to dying. Then did he spy his golden crown and bemoaned himself, saying, "Alas that I should so soon turn as a dog to his vomit! Alas! for now were I but wounded with the bleeding spear itself, and of a wound that should for ever bleed, I could be none too wounded for my deserts."

So there as he lay bitter of heart he turned the shield away from him, not bearing to look upon it, and hung it to a bough hard by, and there it glistened in the sun the while he turned the other way and raged, and felt that he would dwell a savage man for evermore within the woods.

But anon came through the woods a damsel riding on a palfrey, and but a single squire attending. And when she saw the shield she stayed her horse and called her squire to search for him who owned it, for she marvelled to see Queen Guinevere's crown thereon.

Then when she had found Sir Balin she demanded straightway that he should help her through the woods, for that she was journeying to King Mark of Cornwall, and her good knight had met some misadventure and had left her with none but this squire. "And I know thee for a worshipful man and one from Arthur's hall, for I see by this cognisance that thou art from the court." Then did Sir Balin redden and say, "Ask me not of it, for I have shamed it. Alas! that so great a Queen's name, which high Sir Lancelot hath lifted up, and been lifted up by, should through me and my villainy come to disgrace!" Thereon the damsel, looking keenly at him, laughed, and when he asked her why, laughed long and loud, and cried that little shame could he do to the Queen

or Lancelot either which they had not themselves already done themselves.

And when he stood as Lot's wife stood, salt-petrified, and stared at her, she cried again, "Sir Knight, ye need not gaze thus at me as if I were a reder of fables and a teller of false tales. Now let me tell thee how I saw myself Sir Lancelot and the Queen within a bower at Camelot but twelve months since and heard her say, 'O sir, my lord Sir Lancelot, for thou indeed art my true lord, and none other save by the law.'"

But when he heard her thus, his evil spirit leapt upon him and tare him and drove him mad, and then he cried with a great yell, and dragged the shield from off the tree, and then and there he cast it to the ground, drave his mailed foot through the midst of it, and split the royal crown in twain, and cast the two halves far from him among the long weeds of the wood. Then at that cry came Balan riding through the forest, and when he saw the broken shield and crown lie on the earth he spurred his horse and said, "Sir Knight, keep well thyself, for here is one shall overthrow thee for the despite thou hast done the Queen!" At that Sir Balin, for he knew not that it was Sir Balan, seeing that his newly granted shield had yet no bearing, called to the squire to lend him his shield, and, catching up the spear he gat from Pelles' castle, ran his horse fiercely to meet Sir Balan. And so sore was their onset that either overthrew the other to the earth; but Balin's spear smote through Sir Balan's shield and made the first mark it had ever borne, and through the rent it pierced to Balan's side and thrust him through with deadly wounds, wherefrom the blood streamed and could not be stayed until he fainted with the loss of blood; and Balin's horse rolled on him as he fell, and wounded him so sorely that he swooned with agony.

But when they thus lay, the damsel and her squire

unlaced their helms and gave them air, and presently when they came to themselves they gazed as men gone newly wild upon each other, and with a mighty cry they either swooned away again, and so lay swooning for an hour. Then did the damsel wait and watch to see how this might end, and withdrew herself behind the leaves.

Anon Sir Balin opened first his eyes, and then with groanings which he could not hide for pain he slowly crawled to whither his brother lay. And then did he put from off his brother's face his hair, and leaned and kissed him, and left his face beblooded from his lips, for by now his life began to flow away from his hidden inner wounds.

Then presently thereafter Balan woke up also from his swoon, and when he saw his brother so hang over him he flung his arm about his neck and drew his face again down to him and said lowly in his ear, "Alas, alas, mine own dear brother, that I should thus have given thee thy death! But wherefore hadst thou no shield, and wherefore was it rent asunder and defiled? O brother! for it grieveth me more than death to see this thing." Then did Sir Balin tell him all that Sir Garlon and afterwards the damsel had told him of the Queen, and when Sir Balan heard it he moaned greatly and cried out that Garlon was a felon knight, well known about those marches for his evil deeds and lies, and the damsel he well believed, if she were going to King Mark, was as bad as he. "Perchance Sir Garlon," said he, "was the very knight she said had left her: and would I could find her or her squire," he said, "for even dead man as I am I fain would now abolish her, lest she work more evil than this dolorous stroke she hath caused betwixt us two."

When the damsel heard them thus speak, she feared for her life lest the wounded knight might be recovered

and might find her, and stealthily she sped away to King Mark and after to Arthur's court, and there she told how she had overheard from Knights of Arthur's Table scandal beyond all disproof about Sir Lancelot and the Queen. And thus in truth the Dolorous Stroke was struck, which first shook to its base the stately order of the Table Round.

Then when the damsel left them came the Lady of the Lake and found Sir Balin and Sir Balan at their last breaths, and caused them to be solemnly buried, and sang above them an high song.

# CHAPTER VI.

## MY MOTHER'S JOURNAL, AND LETTERS 1873–74.

*The Revenge, Connaught, Dr Tennyson in Russia, Macugnaga, London, Cambridge.*

On March 6th my father went to Windsor, in obedience to a command from the Queen; and he wrote to my mother: "The visit to Windsor went off very well, and we were first ushered into a long corridor in the Castle. There the Queen came, and was very kindly, asking after all at home, pitying Lady Simeon (for the loss of Sir John). We talked too of Romanism and Protestantism. Then I walked with the Dean and Lady Augusta to Frogmore, and pottered about till the Queen and Princess Beatrice arrived. The Queen took me into the building and explained everything."

On March 9th he met Mr Markham (now Sir Clements Markham), the secretary of the Hakluyt Society, who had undertaken to give him all information about Sir Richard Grenville; and he wrote to my mother: "Sir Richard Grenville in one ship, 'the Revenge,' fought fifty-three Spanish ships of the line for fifteen hours: a tremendous story, out-rivalling Agincourt."

The line, "At Florés in the Azorés Sir Richard Grenville lay," was on my father's desk for years, but he finished the ballad at last all at once in a day or two.

When he returned from London, he read the account of Sir Richard Grenville in Froude. A telegram arrived saying that the Dean was commanded by the Queen to ask whether, if some

honour were offered to A., it would be acceptable. A. wrote that he did not himself care for any honour except as a symbol of the Queen's kindness. The old life had been too good to desire any change even in outward things.

*March 17th.* Professor Tyndall and Mr Huxley called. Mr Huxley seemed to be universal in his interest and to have keen enjoyment of life. He spoke of "In Memoriam[1]." Professor Tyndall and Dr (now Sir Joseph) Hooker came to tea. Lord Dufferin's letter to A., telling of the happy effect that his words about the "True North" in the Epilogue to the "Idylls" have had in Canada, pleased him. It is a blessing to think that they may have done good, and helped somewhat to a more perfect union of England with her Colonies.—

OTTAWA, *Feb. 25th*, 1873.

MY DEAR MR TENNYSON,

I cannot help writing a line to thank you on behalf of the generous and loyal people whose government I am now administering, for the spirited denunciation with which you have branded those who are seeking to dissolve the Empire, and to alienate and disgust the inhabitants of this most powerful and prosperous colony. Since arriving here I have had ample opportunity of becoming acquainted with the intimate convictions of the Canadians upon this subject, and with scarcely an individual exception, I find they cling with fanatical tenacity to their birthright as Englishmen, and to their hereditary association in the past and future glories of the mother country. Though for two or three generations his family may have been established in this country, and he himself has never crossed the Atlantic, a Canadian seldom fails to allude to England as "Home." They take the liveliest interest in her welfare, and entertain the strongest personal feeling of affection for their Sovereign.

Moreover it must be remembered that these sentiments are perfectly unselfish and disinterested. Not a penny of British money is spent in the country, and some imagine their purely material interests might be benefited by annexation to the States. On the other hand the assertion that their connection with Great Britain weakens their self-confidence or damps the ardour of Canadian Nationality is a pure invention. Amongst

[1] "He (Huxley) once spoke strongly of the insight into scientific method shown in Tennyson's 'In Memoriam.'" "Thomas Henry Huxley," by Wilfrid Ward, *Nineteenth Century*, August, 1896.

no people have I ever met more contentment with their general condition, a more legitimate pride in all those characteristics which constitute their nationality, or a firmer faith in the destinies in store for them. Your noble words have struck responsive fire from every heart; they have been published in every newspaper, and have been completely effectual to heal the wounds occasioned by the senseless language of the *Times*.

I hope you will forgive me for thus troubling you, but you have invariably shown me so much kindness and indulgence, that I cannot resist my inclination to let you know how deeply all in this "True North" feel indebted to you.

Yours sincerely, DUFFERIN.

*To Lord Dufferin.*

*February*, 1873.

MY DEAR LORD DUFFERIN,

Since you have so near an interest in "that true North," I thought it might not displease you to receive from myself my lines to the Queen. I send therefore the two volumes of the "Idylls" containing them, with the assurance of the great interest we take in your work there, and our best wishes that it may prosper, and you and yours also.

Believe me, yours ever,

A. TENNYSON.

*From Lord Dufferin.*

CANADA, *March 3rd*, 1873.

MY DEAR MR TENNYSON,

I cannot say how inexpressibly delighted I have been by the arrival of your two noble volumes, or how deeply I feel your kindness in having remembered me. I am all the more pleased, as by the previous mail I had already written to tell you of the happy effect produced in Canada by the glorious lines with which the "Idylls of the King" conclude. Canada may well be proud that her loyal aspirations should be thus imperishably recorded in the greatest poem of this generation.

Ever yours sincerely and gratefully, DUFFERIN.

*March 25th.* This day brought the kindest of letters from Mr Gladstone, offering a baronetcy from the Queen. "Nothing can be kinder," wrote A., "than your letter, and I shall always treasure it; but will you allow me to meditate your proposal for a day or two before returning a definite answer?" The following reply was subsequently sent:

*March 30th.*

MY DEAR GLADSTONE,

I do not like to trouble you about my own personal matters in the midst of your absorbing public work; but not only on account of my feeling for yourself, but also for the sake of that memory[1] which we share, I speak frankly to you when I say that I had rather we should remain plain Mr and Mrs, and that, if it were possible, the title should first be assumed by our son at any age it may be thought right to fix upon: but like enough this is against all precedent, and could not be managed: and on no account would I have suggested it, were there the least chance of the Queen's construing it into a slight of the proffered honour. I hope that I have too much of the old-world loyalty left in me not to wear my lady's favours against all comers, should you think that it would be more agreeable to Her Majesty that I should do so. * * *

Believe me yours ever, A. TENNYSON.

Mr Gladstone answered that to give Hallam a baronetcy during his father's lifetime would be an innovation, but that the innovation *might be* attempted.

*April 16th.* A. again wrote to Mr Gladstone:

Accept my thanks for having made clear my wish and my motives to the Queen. Now that I have Her Majesty's sanction as well as your own, I am not likely to change my mind on the subject. Hallam, to whom we have spoken regarding it since my last, would not like

[1] Arthur Hallam was the friend of both.

to wear the honour during my lifetime. For the rest I leave myself in your hands, being quite sure that you will do what is best and when best. You have much good work, I trust, to accomplish before the time of your retirement from office.

With kindest regards from my wife and myself,

I am yours ever, A. TENNYSON.

*May 8th.* Mr Browning's *Red Cotton Nightcap Country* came from himself.

Among the lines which my father liked were

"Palatial gloomy chambers for parade,
And passage lengths of lost significance,"

and he praised the simile about the man with his dead comrade in the lighthouse. He wrote to Mr Browning:

FARRINGFORD, FRESHWATER,
ISLE OF WIGHT, *May 8th*, 1873.

MY DEAR R. B.,

My wife has just cut the leaves. I have yet again to thank you, and feel rather ashamed that I have nothing of my own to send you back, but your Muse is prolific as Hecuba, and mine by the side of her, an old barren cow.

Yours ever, A. T.

*June 10th.* The Bishop of Winchester (Wilberforce), Bishop of Albany and others. Six Americans tramped up the drive and rang at the door-bell, and asked to see A. He did not feel up to entertaining six strange Americans, so rushed up the tower followed by the two bishops—but eventually asked the Bishop of Winchester to go down and receive them, saying, "A live Bishop will be much more appreciated than a Poet Laureate." So down the Bishop went from the study, and made himself most agreeable, and they departed charmed. Before, he seemed to be only

brilliant, but to-day, he seemed more like an old friend, full of strength, earnestness, and wide knowledge.

A. repeated this anecdote of his once being driven by "the King of Connaught."

"The waiter at the inn told me that there was a stream that leapt down Hungry Head clear for several hundred feet. I accordingly ordered out a car, and before I had gone far, the carman began to talk to me, and pulled out a great seal from his pocket and said, 'Do you know those arms, your honour?' I answered, 'No,' and he said, 'These are the MacCarthy More, and the Sullivan! great names, your honour!' I assented, and he continued, 'If I had my rights I should be king of Connaught.' I daresay that he would be. We drove on, and it began to rain in cataracts, and we got drenched, and went into an Irish shanty where there were a woman and her little son. The king dried my stockings and went to sleep on a bench. The woman drew me up a stool to the turf fire with the courtly air of a queen. While he was asleep, I heard the mother say to the boy 'Johnny' several times (she didn't speak a word of English). The king awoke, and, as we were going out, I said 'Johnny,' and the little boy with a protuberant paunch (protuberant I suppose from eating potatoes) ran forward, and I gave him a sixpence. The woman, with her black hair over her shoulders, and her eyes streaming with tears, passionately closed her hands over the boy's hand in which was the sixpence. When the king and I climbed into the car, I, in my stupid Saxon way, thinking it was the beggarly sixpence that had made the woman grateful, expressed my astonishment at such gratitude. He said, 'It was not the sixpence, your honour, it was the stranger's gift.' We drove on to the waterfall. It was, as I expected, a poor affair, and trickled down the side of the mountain, tho' in full flood after rain it might have leapt some hundred feet or so clear of the rock. When we returned to the inn, the waiter said to the king, who was a jolly good fellow, 'Have you been telling the gentleman of your great blood?' and he drew himself up, answering, 'The gentleman is a gentleman, every inch of him.'"

Then A. told the thrilling story of his father's stay in Russia: how, as a very young man, he was dining with our English Minister, Lord St Helens, at St Petersburg, when he said, across a Russian, to Lord St Helens, "It is perfectly well-known in England who murdered the Emperor Paul: it was

Count So and So." Whereat a dead silence fell on the company. After dinner Lord St Helens called Dr Tennyson aside and said, "Ride for your life from this city: the man across whom you were speaking to me was the Count So and So, whom you accused of murdering the Emperor Paul." Dr Tennyson took horse and rode for weeks and weeks through Russia, till he came to the Crimea where he fell ill. He became delirious, and remembered the wild country-people dancing round his bed with magical incantations. Once in every three months an English courier passed through this village where he lay ill, and as he passed through the village blew a horn. It all depended on Dr Tennyson's hearing this horn whether he could escape from Russia, for he had no money. In his delirium he would perpetually start up agonized lest he had missed it. At last the courier came, the horn was blown and he heard the sound, and applied to the courier to take him. The courier agreed, and Dr Tennyson journeyed with him. He was a drunken fellow and dropt all his despatches on the road. Dr Tennyson picked them up, but did not say that he had done so. The courier was in despair, and at last Dr Tennyson gave them to him, with a warning that he must not be drunken in future. At one frontier town the sentries had barred the gates, because it was late night. The courier, not to be daunted, shouted out "Le duc de York." An immediate unbarring ensued, and the sentinels all sprang to attention, and saluted him with deference. So, after less drunkenness on the part of the courier, and many adventures, they managed to reach England.

*September.* A. and Hallam went off to Pontresina, thence to the Italian lakes, Val Sesia, and Val d' Anzasca. Hallam writes:

"*Sept. 4th.* Val d' Anzasca. All to-day Monte Rosa has been wrapped in cloud, except at 5 o'clock this morning when we had a beautiful view. Above fold on fold of mountain, covered with walnuts and vines, rose the pinnacles of Monte Rosa, flushed with the morning sun, and slowly becoming bright gold. He has begun a poem, 'The Voice and the Peak[1],' describing the torrent in this valley,

Green-rushing from the rosy thrones of dawn.

[1] Included, with "England and America," in the Cabinet Edition, 1873–74.

The Val d' Anzasca is, he thinks, *the grandest valley that he has seen in the Alps.* He is in good spirits and quoting the *Cinque Maggio* of Manzoni.

*Sept.* 5*th.* Ponte Grande. Last night saw the mountains silvered with moonlight over black pines. This morning walked back from Macugnaga, going to Domo d' Ossola.

Bauer-Sierre. Returned through Domo d' Ossola over the Simplon. The coming over was a great disappointment. Thick mist the whole of the way except the first half-hour when we started from the Simplon Inn. He was full of these lines on the Simplon by Wordsworth:

> 'The immeasurable height
> Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,
> The stationary blast of waterfalls,
> And in the narrow rent, at every turn,
> Winds thwarting winds bewildered and forlorn.'

During the evening we consoled ourselves by reading *Lélia* by George Sand: whose *Consuelo* and *Petite Fadette* were favourites of his. Nothing was to be heard at night thro' the mist but the shrill ticking of a church clock, which sounded, he said, 'in the thick darkness like the cry of a dying man.' He says he once lived near a stable clock which he never *heard* but which he *felt*, most ghostlywise, through the boards.

*Sept.* 10*th.* Arrived at Neufchâtel: deep-coloured rainbow over the lake. He has been telling me that 'the only cheerful thing he ever saw in going home by coach over the flats from Cambridge to Lincolnshire was the gray line of dawn over Whittlesea mere.' Every foreigner seems to talk of nothing else but the Tichborne trial."

From Neufchâtel they returned straight home.

## *Seamore Place, London.*

Early in November A. received the following letter from a stranger (who did not sign his name). The letter and the packet of flowers sent with it greatly touched him.

CHATHAM, U. S. AMERICA,
*25th October*, 1873.

MY DEAR SIR,

These "nurslings" of our fall and summer skies which, thinking of you, I plucked, I send as messengers of the love and respect and affection, nay the gratitude, which I bear to one whom God has so greatly blessed with such good gifts, with so true an eye, so exquisite an ear for all sights and sounds of this our beautiful and mysterious world.

Could I express in words all that I owe to you, all those pleasures and delights of the past, which seem so interwoven with words and scenes and thoughts of your making, I might seem almost untruthful, or at least prone to exaggeration. Yet I can say in all truth that the purest and truest pleasures of my life have been derived from you.

The times have been very bitter to most of us, and we still suffer from the results of our disastrous conflict, and the terrible pressure, but we think that we are just beginning to see the dawn, or we hope so at any rate. Going to my daily work this fall through the pine lands, all purple and golden, and looking too over "the happy autumn fields" with their rich harvest, I seemed to feel happier than for many a year since that bitter time from which we date so many evils.

I thought of that delightful time still further back, old college times, those famous discussions in which you too seemed to take a part: while round us "All the thickets rang to many a flute of Arcady."

Many of those companions and friends sleep their last sleep in the far West, but some are left.

I thought to myself (but it may be a weak thought, born of sentiment or weakness) that these words from a far-off land, these humble flowers from the same, might please you. Certainly it is a thought of pleasure to me that your eye will rest on them, mayhap but for a moment, that your hand may touch them. That all things good may attend you and yours now and for all time, is my hearty prayer.

I am, with respect and gratitude,

Your very obliged

* * *

*Oct. 28th.* London. 4 Seamore Place. We took up our abode at Seamore Place in the house we shared with Lady Franklin, and A. likes it the best of any house we have had in London. He is reading *The Mystery of Matter* by Hinton who is an aurist by profession, and who on giving a prescription one day wrote (so absorbed was he in the mysteries of the universe), "To be rubbed round the world night and morning."

*Nov. 8th.* A. and the boys went with Annie Thackeray to Irving's *Richelieu.*

He did not care for *Richelieu*, but one thing he remembered, after the play was over, as good:

"Ye safe and formal men
Who write the deeds and with unfeverish hand
Weigh in nice scales the motives of the great."

He described to Irving his conception of the manner in which "Hamlet" ought to be acted.

Mrs Thackeray Ritchie wrote of a similar evening in 1874 after *Hamlet:*

The play was over, and we ourselves seemed a part of it still; here were the players, and our own prince poet, in that familiar simple voice we all know, explaining the art, going straight to the point in his own downright fashion, criticising with delicate appreciation, by the irresistible force of truth and true instinct carrying all before him. "You are a good actor lost," one of them, the real actors, said to him, laughing as he spoke.

The parts of Irving's *Hamlet* which my father thought best were the dreamy and poetical sides, and when he showed the "method in his madness as well as the madness in his method." To Irving he said, "*Hamlet* is a many-faceted gem, and you have given more facets than anyone I have seen."

He was daily at Mr Woolner's studio because of the new bust[1].

*Nov. 15th.* A. went to Cambridge.

He had lunches and dinners, and walks with Trinity fellows and undergraduates, and was as happy as a boy.

He was full of reminiscences too: remarking, for instance, how he had idealized Nevile's Court in "The Princess": and how the "six hundred maidens clad in purest white" was taken from the striking memory of the white-surpliced undergraduates in Trinity Chapel; and he described the effect of the Trinity organ upon him:

> While the great organ almost burst his pipes,
> Groaning for power, and rolling thro' the court
> A long melodious thunder to the sound
> Of solemn psalms, and silver litanies.

He said: "I see a ghost of a friend in every corner of the old place."

On his return Mr Furnivall called about the Shakespeare Society, which he wishes to found, and to make A. president. This honour he has declined, hating to push himself forward as a learned Shakespearian, but he has agreed to join the Society.

The boys walked with him to call on Mr Carlyle, who thought that we were to be ruined by a "government of party, headed by a gentleman Jew who sits at the top of chaos." However he preferred Disraeli to Gladstone. Mr Carlyle called upon me, and was very interesting and touching about old days, and was afraid of tiring me by over-talking.

Edward Fitzgerald wrote:

MY DEAR ALFRED,

I write my yearly letter to yourself this time, because I have a word to say about "Gareth" which your publisher sent me as "from the author." I don't think it is mere perversity

[1] In 1894 the people of Freshwater generously wished to buy this bust (which represented my father with his beard) and to place it in their church, but Mrs Woolner reserved it for some public gallery.

that makes me like it better than all its predecessors, save and except (of course) the old "Morte." The subject, the young knight who can endure and conquer, interests me more than all the heroines of the 1st volume. I do not know if I admire more *separate* passages in this "Idyll" than in the others; for I have admired *many* in *all.* But I do admire several here very much, as

The journey to Camelot, pp. 13–14,
All Gareth's vassalage, 31–34,
Departure with Lynette, 42,
Sitting at table with the Barons, 54,
Phantom of past life, 71,

and many other passages and expressions "quæ nunc perscribere longum est." I doubt that Mrs A. T. will have to let me know how you all of you are. I suppose got back to your Island by this time. Your eldest boy at Cambridge too! I won't write any more in mercy to your eyes as well as mine. But I am

Yours and wife's always devotedly,

E. F. G.

*December.* A. went with Hallam to see Lady Martin (Helen Faucit) in *As You Like It.* Her 'Rosalind,' he felt, had great distinction. He held that one of the most exquisite things for simplicity and eloquence in Shakespeare is Rosalind's saying to Orlando,

"Sir, you have wrestled well
And overthrown more than your enemies."

*Dec. 19th.* Mr Browning dined with us. He was very affectionate and delightful. It was a great pleasure to hear Mr Browning's words—that he had not had so happy a time for a long while as since we have been in town.

We have been troubled again by publishing affairs. It is a pity that these splitting up of partnerships drive A. from one publisher to another. Let us hope however that he has found a steadfast publisher in Mr King, with whom he may stay to the end. That he is most liberal there can be no doubt.

A. wrote to Mr Gladstone about Mr Furnivall's Shakespeare Society: "As to Furnivall I believe him to be a hard-working,

painstaking, conscientious man...I have refused the Presidency and even a Vice-Presidency of the Shakespeare Society. I am now merely a subscriber, though I have promised, if need be, to give them a donation. I think you cannot do better than subscribe..."

## 1874.

*My mother's journal.—"Welcome to Alexandrovna," "Queen Mary," Pyrenees, Letters and Recollections.*

"Old Brooks" (W. H. Brookfield), A.'s old and true friend, has passed away. A. wrote to Mrs Brookfield:

FARRINGFORD, FRESHWATER,
ISLE OF WIGHT, *Jan. 18th*, 1874.

MY DEAR JANE,

You will believe that I feel with you, and that I feel that the *dead* lives whatever the pseudo-savants say, and so

May God bless you and yours.

A. T.

After Mr Gladstone had announced the dissolution of Parliament at Greenwich, A. wrote to him:

*Feb. 17th*, 1874.

MY DEAR GLADSTONE,

We have, I need not say, been pained and disgusted at much that has occurred within the last few days; but action and reaction are the law of the world, for which one sometimes hates the world, tho' such a law is, I believe, in the main wholesome for the common weal. Care not, you have done great work, and if even now you rested, your name would be read in one of the fairest pages of English history. I say this, however on some points of policy we may have differed. * * *

Yours ever, A. TENNYSON.

And on March 6th to Lord Houghton, on the death of Lady Houghton:

MY DEAR HOUGHTON,

I was the other day present at a funeral here, and one of the chief mourners reached me her hand silently almost over the grave, and I as silently gave her mine. No words were possible; and this little note, that can do really nothing to help you in your sorrow, is just such a reaching of the hand to you, my old college comrade of more than forty years standing, to show you that I think of you. You have your children; she must live to you more or less in them, and to you and others in the memory and result of her good and charitable life: and I may say that I think I can see as far as one can see in this twilight, that the nobler nature does not pass from its individuality when it passes out of this one life. If you could believe as much, it would be a comfort to you, and perhaps you do. I did not intend to say even so much as this, and will say no more, only that

I am yours affectionately,

A. TENNYSON.

*March 11th.* I persuaded A. to go to town to see to-morrow's procession (the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh entering London after their marriage), he having never seen London in festival. We had had telegrams from Windsor saying that they all liked the "Welcome to Alexandrovna[1]." A. talked of making a play of "Lady Jane Grey."

[A. wrote: *March 12th.* Here it began to snow early in the morning and was snowing when we started at 10 o'clock for Regent Street, where K. had hired seats for the show; fortunately the snow just ceased falling a little before the Queen passed. How she and the Princess did shake their heads incessantly right and left, as if they had necks of india-rubber,

[1] Printed in the *Times*, March 7th, 1874, and on separate sheets.

and that for miles. The people were very enthusiastic, but the lack of sunshine took away all the splendour from the house-decorations and the helmets. The Princess looked large and imperial, I thought. People say that the accent is on the antepenultimate, Alexándrovna. If so, it rather spoils my chorus.

*March 17th.* Sir Samuel and Lady Baker, Dr Quain, and Mr Leland (the American author of the *Breitmann Ballads*, very humorous) came to dinner. Lady Baker is plump and pretty, and does not look as if she had gone thro' all that in Africa among the savages. I have not called anywhere as yet, and I think I may come home at the end of the week. There is another party to-day here and I wish there was not, and another to-morrow at Knowles' and I wish there was not.

*March 21st.* Dined at Lady Franklin's and met Stanley, the Livingstone finder.]

*March 28th.* Review of the Ashantee troops by the Queen at Windsor. We are glad that the Government have taken strenuous steps to relieve the famine in Bengal. A. returned: another photograph of him by Mayall.

*April 10th.* Professor Tyndall, and the Claud Hamiltons, and Sir John Lubbock called. Lately we have been reading Holinshed and Froude's *Mary*, for A. has been thinking about a play of "Queen Mary," and has sketched two or three scenes. For a time he had thought of "William the Silent[1]," but he said that our own history was so great, and that he liked English subjects best, and knew most about them, and that consequently he should do "Queen Mary."

Mr K— wrote that he wanted A. to do a play of "The Armada," or rather to make a sort of panoramic view of Edward's, Mary's and Elizabeth's reigns, but that would be impracticable[2].

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[1] He had been reading Motley's *Dutch Republic*.

[2] He wrote a few lines of a play on "Elizabeth," in which he had imagined a great Armada scene.

*Popularity (an unpublished impromptu, made about this time).*

Popular, Popular, Unpopular!
"You're no Poet"—the critics cried!
"Why?" said the Poet. "You're unpopular!"
Then they cried at the turn of the tide—
"You're no Poet!" "Why?"—"You're popular!"
Pop-gun, Popular and Unpopular!

---

*Tour in France.*

In the summer of this year we went to Paris and St Germain. When in Paris, A. saw some plays at the Théâtre Français, and especially admired Got, the Coquelins, and Mdlle Reichemberg. [From Mdlle Reichemberg in *L'École des Femmes* he took the idea of his "Margery" in "Becket." He looked upon Molière's plays as great works of art, and said, "The *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* contained the germ of the French Revolution."] We afterwards stayed at Tours, where A. and Hallam left myself and Lionel, and proceeded to the Pyrenees.

The sight of the cleft peak of the Pic du Midi d'Ossau A. thought "grand" from the head of the valley, and made an outline sketch of it. "The Pyrenees," he said, "look much more Homeric than the Alps." Many of the mountains are wooded up to the summit.

On our return I had to answer many letters from unknown correspondents, asking advice from A. as to religious questions, and desiring criticism of poems, etc., and I became very ill[1], and could do but little, so my journal ends here. After a time Hallam came home from Cambridge to help A. in reading books for him, writing letters, and in his work generally.

[*End of my mother's journal.*]

[1] My mother was never strong, but after this she was almost entirely confined to her sofa. The Master of Trinity (Dr Butler) writes to me (Aug. 13th, 1896): "Your mother's life has been one of exceptional beauty and power. How few will ever be able to estimate all she did, while lying for years on that sofa. It always seemed to me a kind of sanctuary, from which issued words of the 'Sursum corda' order, words of patriotism, and fearlessness, and faith."

*Letters of this Period.*

Among the letters of this year is the following rough copy of part of a letter from my father to someone unnamed:

*May 7th*, 1874.

SIR,

I have to thank you for your essay and your photograph; the face is that of one born to grapple with difficulties, metaphysical or other; and the essay does not belie the face—a vigorous subtle résumé of metaphysic, ending yet once again in the strange history of the human race, with the placid Buddha, as verified by the XIXth Century anæsthetics. But what need you my praise when you have secured the approval of him, who is by report our greatest or one of our greatest Hegelians, whereas I have but a gleam of Kant, and have hardly turned a page of Hegel, almost all that I know of him having come to me "obiter" and obscurely thro' the talk of others; and I have never delivered myself to dialectics.

With respect to anæsthetic treatment, I cannot say my slight experience of chloroform (the only anæsthetic I have ever tried) has tended to confirm what you advance.

I was in Scotland about the time when Dr Simpson brought chloroform into use, and I had a slight but very painful operation on the nail of the great toe to undergo, and the friend with whom I was staying urged me to try Simpson's prescription. When I came out of the trance, I took the surgeon for the waiter of Gliddon's cigar divan, a place which has disappeared from the face of the world whole decades ago, and where I had been once, or perhaps twice, many years before, and thro' all those

years, as far as I know, the recollection of my one or two visits had never occurred to me.

Then, seeing my foot bare, I said to the surgeon, "Where the deuce have you put my stocking and boot? do you think I can walk thro' the streets barefoot?" Immediately after this I laughed, and said, "Oh, I see." I could not but conclude that, during the operation, the mind had been passing thro' a little history and had arrived easily and "gradatim" at this all-but-forgotten Gliddon's cigar divan. To be sure, the friend who held my hand and supplied the handkerchief, told me that first of all I bolted out a long metaphysical term, which he could not re-word to me.

A. TENNYSON.

*To F. T. Palgrave (about the tour in France).*

FARRINGFORD,
*October 16th*, 1874.

DEAR PALGRAVE,

We had not much of a tour. We stayed a week in Paris and then went on to St Germain, which she found too cold for her; then to Tours, where we stopt some weeks at the Hôtel de l'Univers, but where it was still very blustering and by no means warm. Some Italians, who were at the inn with us, said the cold made them shudder.

I and Hallam started for a few days to the Pyrenees, leaving the wife and Lionel at Tours. I remembered seeing, from the Esplanade at Pau, the cleft peak of the Dent du Midi d'Ossau far away; and steamed away south to make a nearer acquaintance with that, and found him worth seeing; then to Cauteretz, where I had been twice before, and to Gavarnie. So after a few days returned to Tours, and then home, not much of a tour.

As for the "May Queen," King and Co. hire my copy right for five years: you must ask them.

I congratulate you upon the birth of your fourt daughter, and am

Yours ever,

A. TENNYSON.

We shall take no house in London this winter, and I cannot tell you when I shall be there.

The following was in answer to a letter about two fine lines (in E. F. G.'s "Omar Khayyám") which my father greatly admired; Fitzgerald had taken into his head that my father had said they had been "copied from some lines in 'The Gardener's Daughter[1].'" The lines were

"The stars are setting, and the caravan
Starts for the dawn of nothing! O make haste!"

DEAR MRS TENNYSON,

I had really meant to write again to Alfred this evening; to say that I repented of having bothered him about "Omar"! His (Alfred's) letter is come to-day however: and I am glad that he is not bothered at all and for the best of reasons: having no alternative to be bothered with.

I had meant to say besides, that what I asked him about "Omar" had reminded me of what I had often thought and meant to say about a very different thing indeed; namely two of that "paltry Poet's" own wretched effusions: the "Gardener's and Miller's Daughters": of which I have always thought he should reprint the *first drafts*. I do not say they were better than the accepted copies: I do not think they are: but there are I think some things better in them; some, at any rate, which should not be lost. There was something more of the "Wine and Walnut" vein of recollection in the first edition of

[1] The summer pilot of an empty heart
Unto the shores of nothing!

the Miller story, and I still retain in my copy the opening stanza (partially altered by the paltry one himself) beginning—

I met in all the close green ways,
While walking with my *rod and line*[1]—

the paltry one having been frightened out of "line and rod" by C. North. Then there was a touch of *Titian landscape* (I guessed it, and was right) in the "Gardener," "Autumn touching the fallows[2]," etc., which I thought and think threw the living figures better into relief than the Daughters of the Year, who now pass thro' the Garden. I repeat that I do not maintain the poem is not altogether improved by the change, which would be setting my wits against a very poor bird, but I should publish, for posterity to see, the first draft of both these paltry poems.

When I look at the *Athenæum* I see there are at least four poets scarce inferior to Dante, Shakespeare, etc., Browning, Morris, D. G. Rossetti, Miss Do. They will have their day.

But when I talk so, my bile is invariably on fire. *I! I!* crib from the "Gardener," which the paltry poet charges me with! Oh, Dem! But really, I should like to hear what this *Paltry-Innuendo-maker* alludes to: if it be any gloss of mine on "Omar," very little doubt it came from some of those paltry poems; but if it *should* be old Omar, not even the spite of a poet *inferior* to *Browning* can accuse the old Persian of theft. I should like to find that the *so-called* poet had jumped at one thought. So do tell me what *rankles* in poor Alfred's mind, and I will relieve him at once.

Ever your E. FITZGERALD.

On December 29th the Queen, through Mr Disraeli, offered my father a baronetcy.

*From the Right Hon. B. Disraeli.*

BOURNEMOUTH, *Dec. 29th*, 1874.

DEAR MR TENNYSON,

A government should recognize intellect. It elevates and sustains the spirit of a nation. But it is an office not easy

[1] See quotation in Vol. I. p. 117.
[2] See quotation in Vol. I. p. 198.

to fulfil, for if it falls into favouritism and the patronage of mediocrity, instead of raising the national sentiment, it might degrade and debase it. Her Majesty, by the advice of Her Ministers, has testified in the Arctic expedition, and will in other forms, her sympathy with science. But it is desirable that the claims of high letters should be equally acknowledged. This is not so easy a matter, because it is in the nature of things, that the test of merit cannot be so precise in literature as in science. Nevertheless there are some living names, however few, which I would fain believe will reach posterity, and yours is among the foremost. I should be glad, therefore, if agreeable to yourself, to submit your name to the Queen for the distinction of a baronetcy, so that, by an hereditary honour, there may always be a living memorial of the appreciation of your genius by your countrymen. Have the kindness to inform me of your feelings on this subject; I shall remain here to the 4th of January. After that it will be best to direct to me at 10 Downing Street, Whitehall.

I have the honour to remain, dear Mr Tennyson,

Faithfully yours, B. DISRAELI.

My father answered Mr Disraeli that Mr Gladstone had offered a baronetcy before, and that he would prefer to adhere to the decision to which he had then come: that he respectfully declined the honour himself but wished it might be conferred if possible after his death on his son. Mr Disraeli replied that such a course as reserving a baronetcy for a son was contrary to all precedent. My father then wrote as follows:

ALDWORTH, BLACKDOWN,
HASLEMERE.

DEAR MR DISRAELI,

It is quite certain that I never desired anything contrary to precedent; nor did Mr Gladstone pledge himself to anything contrary, as (for I have been looking over his letters) he expressly stated. I am

therefore fully aware that his promise on the subject was to be interpreted according to precedent, with whatever reserves this may imply. Be the issue what it may, my son is happy in the knowledge of the Queen's gracious intention to his father, and of Mr Gladstone's kindness, and your own.

I have the honour to be yours faithfully,

A. TENNYSON.

At the end of this year my father received a letter from a bricklayer in America, the son of an old Somersby bricklayer, which delighted him, and which obtained a line or two of cordial thanks.

TRENTON, MISSOURI, 1874.

MR TENNYSON,

Sir, I don't know whether this will gain me a response; I know it ought. I have long wished I could get a line from you, since your poetry is in almost every house considered respectable, and your name a household word even out here in the far west. I will relate one anecdote in proof. A good little sewing girl had gained my esteem. I wished to make her a present, and she said, "If I had Tennyson's poems!"

I am H. H. Atkinson, son of Thomas Atkinson, bricklayer, Hagg, near Somersby, and am a bricklayer myself. You will scarcely remember my father building the Doctor's dining-room, you were very young then, about my age. My reminiscences of the Tennyson family run away back. My mother was a Tealby woman, and was in her young days dressmaker for the old Squire's lady, and my father thought so much of the Doctor who was always the Doctor par excellence. The public papers here describe you as a stout broad-shouldered man, and I remember the Doctor so well that if you resemble him I think I should know you. Ah me! it only seems like yesterday, when the Doctor came down to scold the old coachman for ordering my father to build the new carriage-house on too large a plan (coachee would say to the Doctor what no one else dare),

said he, "By G—d, sir, you have a twopenny coachman, I have a twopenny master." I can just now see the good Doctor smile, and walk away, and the coach-house was built. I can just now see the apple-trees that bore such fine yellow apples running up from the stables to the house, the broad lawn where some boys, whom I wot of, used to astonish me by coming out with those wondrous gauze helmets and long foils, and I was afraid mischief would be done. You were not very broad-shouldered then I remember. Do you remember the Siberian crab-tree down the garden, the old Scotch firs at the house-end where the rooks used to build, and those tiny bantams that made their home over the oven, and the handsome cock who was burned to death? I remember one Good Friday we were working for the Doctor. I see him coming, and hear him saying, "Atkinson, you must leave work and go to church," and I remember he preached from "As Moses lifted up the serpent," the first time I had ever heard it as a text and that is near fifty years ago. Ah sir! perhaps no man in America knows as well as I where you first heard the wrens twitter, the blackbirds, thrushes, the robins sing. Many a speckled trout and silver eel have I caught in the brook, running through the meadow below.

And now I am here about fifteen hundred miles west of New York, asking for an autograph all the way from the Isle of Wight.

If you can spare me a line, I would like to know how many children you have, also if Mr Fred is living, Mr Charles (Turner now), also Miss Emily whom everybody loved, also Mr Arthur.

I was burnt out in Chicago, and have lost a fine boy since then from consumption, my only boy. I live in a house and garden of my own here between two groves; we can grow fine peaches here, also all kinds of melons, etc. etc. without extra care. Have I tired you? Well, my heart grows soft and young again in looking over the long past, tho' I have sail'd the seas over, I've crossed the wide ocean.

If this goes into your waste basket, please excuse the scrawl and

Believe me, sir, yours truly, H. H. ATKINSON.

At this time my father often felt oppressed by the compliments and curiosity of undiscerning critics, and

would say: "I hate the blare and blaze of so-called fame. What business has the public to want to know all about Byron's wildnesses? He has given them fine work, and they ought to be satisfied. It is all for the sake of babble. As for the excuse, 'Tôt ou tard tout se sait,' nothing can be falser as far as this world is concerned. The surface of the *tout* may be, but the *tout* never is, correctly known. 'If one knew all, one would pardon all,' is much more likely to be the truth. The worth of a biography depends on whether it is done by one who wholly loves the man whose life he writes, yet loves him with a discriminating love. Few of these gossiping biographies are the man, more often the writer." He wrote out these lines then.

*Fame.* (*Unpublished.*)

Well, as to Fame, who strides the earth
  With that long horn she loves to blow,
I know a little of her worth,
  And I will tell you what I know—
This London once was middle sea,
  These hills were plains within the past,
They will be plains again, and we,
  Poor devils, babble "we shall last."

# CHAPTER VII.

## METAPHYSICAL SOCIETY.

Our true seamates regather round the mast—
* * * * *
For some, descending from the sacred peak
Of hoar high-templed Faith, have leagued again
Their lot with ours to rove the world about;
And some are wilder comrades, sworn to seek
If any golden harbour be for men
In seas of Death and sunless gulfs of Doubt.

---

My faith is large in Time
And that which shapes it to some perfect end.

The Metaphysical Society was founded, in 1869, by my father, Mr Pritchard, and Mr Knowles, the idea being first mooted by Mr Knowles. The latter writes to me: "The Metaphysical Society owed its existence to your father, for it was entirely through his adhesion to the plan for it that this remarkable club was set on foot. At first it was intended that no distinct and avowed opponents of Christianity should be invited, though Anglicans of all shades, Roman Catholics, Unitarians, and Nonconformists should be eligible. But it was soon felt that if any real discussion of Christian evidences was to take place, the opposition ought to be fully and fairly represented. This extension of the plan commended itself especially to Dean Stanley, whom I consulted early about it, and it was when talking over it at the Deanery

one day, with him and Lady Augusta, that she suggested the name of 'Metaphysical Society' as being better than 'Theological Society' in the altered circumstances of its composition." The object of the Society therefore was, that those who were ranged on the side of faith should meet those who were ranged on the side of unfaith, and freely interchange their views. Darwin's theory of evolution was prominent in men's minds, and my father for one thought that, although evolution in a modified form was partially true, some of Darwin's disciples had drawn unwarrantable inferences from the theory, and had arrogated to themselves too much. His friends and himself were grieved at the scorn that the theological and the agnostic parties showed toward each other, and considered that meeting on a friendly footing would do much toward the ventilation of new doctrines, and the clearing up of misunderstandings, as well as toward the cultivation of charity in controversy, and mutual esteem[1].

I give the earliest members of the Society in order of the names signed in the minute-book: Dean Stanley, Seeley, Roden Noel, James Martineau, W. B. Carpenter, Hinton, Huxley, Pritchard, Hutton, Ward, Bagehot, Froude, Tennyson, Tyndall, Alfred Barry, Lord Arthur Russell, Gladstone, Manning, Knowles, Lubbock, Alford, Alexander Grant, Bishop of St David's, Frederic Harrison, Father Dalgairns, G. Grove, Shadworth Hodgson, Henry Sidgwick, Edmund Lushington, Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, Mark Pattison[2].

[1] Towards the end of his life he rejoiced that the churches were standing shoulder to shoulder in works of charity and education.

[2] The following were afterwards elected: (1870) The Duke of Argyll, Ruskin, Robert Lowe, Grant Duff. (1871) W. R. Greg, A. C. Fraser, Henry Acland, F. D. Maurice, The Archbishop of York, J. B. Mozley. (1872) The Dean of St Paul's, The Bishop of Peterborough, J. Croom Robertson. (1873) FitzJames Stephen, Sylvester, J. C. Bucknill. (1874) Dr Andrew Clark, W. K. Clifford, St George Mivart, Matthew Boulton. (1876) Lord Selborne, John Morley. (1877) Leslie Stephen. (1879) Frederick Pollock,

The subjects originally suggested for discussion were the comparison of the different theories respecting the ultimate grounds of belief in the objective and moral sciences, the logic of the sciences whether physical or social, the immortality of the soul and its personal identity, the personality of God, conscience—its true character, the material hypothesis.

At one of the preliminary meetings, my father said humorously that "Modern science ought at all events to have taught men to separate light from heat," and this was certainly adopted as the rule of the Society.

The first meeting after the formation of the Society took place at the Deanery, Westminster, June 2nd, 1869, under the presidency of Sir John Lubbock, when my father's poem "The Higher Pantheism" was read. With the poem he sent this note to the secretary. "I am not coming up for your meeting, i.e. I believe so, to-day, and your request that you may read the poem at that meeting abashes me. If you are to read it, it ought to be stated surely that I have but ceded to your strongly expressed desire. Hutton can have a copy of it if he choose; but an I had known that such as he wanted it, I would have looked at it again before I let it go." Mr Ward was elected President of the Society in 1870, and my father was always struck with his reckless candour, his liberality, and his "swift dimicatory" ways; and would observe, when Ward was depressed, "If I had Ward's blind faith, I should always be happy." The finest argumentative duels that he had heard, he said, and those which impressed him most, were between Huxley and Martineau. F. D. Maurice he thought was probably "the greatest mind of them all," although often his thoughts were too deep to be easily understood. Grant Duff writes to Mr Wilfrid

Gasquet, C. B. Upton, William Gull, Robert Clarke. (1880) A. J. Balfour, James Sully, A. Barratt.

Ward of one of these meetings, "I do not remember that the Laureate took any part in the discussion, but his mere presence added dignity to a dignified assemblage."

Father Haythornethwaite, W. G. Ward's chaplain, reminds me of one of Ward's stories about my father and Cardinal Manning, which I give in Father Haythornethwaite's words.

"'Why did you show such deference to Manning?' reprovingly asked an agnostic friend of Tennyson, who had seen him and the Cardinal talking together at a 'Metaphysical' meeting, when Tennyson had apparently been as deferential as Johnson on his introduction to the Archbishop of York. 'Because Manning,' Tennyson had replied, 'is the distinguished head of a great Church.' He had a profound respect for sincere religion in every shape, and though it cannot be said that he pinned his faith to formulæ, all Christian Creeds had his sincere good-will and sympathy, and it was his constantly repeated wish that they 'should sink their differences and pull together for the bettering of mankind[1].'"

[1] Father Haythornethwaite's note on this is interesting, but has nothing to do with the Metaphysical Society. "Tennyson liked to tell the story of the French priest he had met abroad, with whom he had conversed in dog-Latin: 'If our Cardinals,' said the priest, 'were not so proud, and your Bishops not so obstinate, there might be some chance of the Union of the Churches.' Tennyson clearly saw the need of Churches and sympathised with all forms of religious belief,

'Thou knowest I hold that forms are needful' ('Akbar'),

and he looked forward, not always unhopefully, to the day when there would be one Shepherd and one Flock. He wished that the Church of England could embrace, as he felt that Christ would have it do, all the great Non-conformist sects that loved the name of Christ. He recognised to the full that an organized religion was the needful guardian of morality. He was indignant at the expulsion of the Religious Orders from France, calling Paul Bert roundly 'a beast,' and angrily asking, 'What is left for poor people if you take away their religion?' He was full of compunction at once having shown a poor man what he thought an inconsistency in the Gospel, lest he should have weakened his faith in the Bible. He would repeat chant-like in his rich voice the hymns of the Roman breviary: his delicate ear particularly revelling in the sonorous roll of the 'Ave Regina Cœlorum.'"

From the discussions of the Metaphysical Society he came out as strongly convinced as ever of the irrationality of pure materialism, while respecting the earnestness and lofty aims of many agnostics. He was glad to receive the impression that theologians of this age were more enlightened than their predecessors, and that there was an endeavour in the Churches to march side by side with science, and bring their teaching into living relation with the movement of contemporary thought.

As for pure metaphysics I have heard him say: "I do not think that we have advanced much beyond the old philosophers."

The last meeting of the Society was held at Dr Martineau's house on May 16th, 1880. Huxley asserted that it "died of too much love"; my father declared that it "perished because after ten years of strenuous effort no one had succeeded in even defining the term 'Metaphysics.'"

Subjoined is an account of my father's metaphysical views as understood by Dr Martineau.

35 GORDON SQUARE, LONDON, W. C.
1893.

MY DEAR LORD TENNYSON,

As the Metaphysical Society arose from your noble father's suggestion, and he was its first President, it is natural to seek in its history for some characteristic traces of his genius and influence; and they would have been found there in abundance, had he assumed the control over its proceedings which he was too willing to leave in other hands. But in such a society the deeper thinkers, especially if they be rare attendants, seldom come to the front; being outstripped by ready talkers who are always there, and who move upon an intellectual plane level to the eye of all. By reference to the secretary's Minute Book I find that out of 100 Meetings between April 21st, 1869, and your father's resignation December 9th, 1879, he was with us only eleven times; usually as a silent listener, exceptionally interposing some short question or pregnant hint. On June 2nd, 1869, being unable to join us, he sent his poem on "The

Higher Pantheism" to be read to us by Mr Knowles. Nothing that he ever wrote was more likely to lead to interesting discussion: but the evening was pre-engaged to a paper of Mr R. H. Hutton's on Herbert Spencer's theory of the Genesis of apparent Moral Intuitions; so that the admiration of that memorable poem remained untouched by a word of criticism.

I seem to remember a special interest shown by your father in a paper contributed by the Rev. F. D. Maurice on the meaning of the words "Nature," "Natural," "Supernatural," November 21st, 1871, the only time that Maurice was ever present (he died April 1st, 1872). The Coleridgian acceptation of these words was not less congenial to the Poet than to the Divine, harmonising and consecrating for both the uniformity of the material and the freedom of the spiritual world. I have the impression that in this fellowship of thoughts with the truest *Vates* of his age, Mr Maurice found a powerful inward support.

The other subjects on which papers were read in your father's presence were the following:

*July* 14, 1869. *The commonsense philosophy of Causation:* Dr W. B. Carpenter.

*June* 15, 1870. *Is there any Axiom of Causation?* Myself. (Mr Tennyson in the chair.)

*July* 13. *The relativity of Knowledge:* Mr Fred. Harrison.

*Dec.* 13. *The emotion of Conviction:* Mr Walter Bagehot.

*July* 11, 1871. *What is Death?* Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol.

*July* 9, 1872. *The supposed necessity for seeking a solution of ultimate Metaphysical Problems:* Mr F. Harrison.

*Nov.* 12. *The five idols of the Theatre:* Mr Shadworth H. Hodgson.

*Dec.* 16, 1873. *Utilitarianism:* Professor Henry Sidgwick.

*Feb.* 12, 1878. *Double truth:* Rev. M. Pattison, Rector of Lincoln College, Oxford.

I cannot recall anything that fell from your father in the discussion of these topics. But in general his sympathies went with the advocate of the more conservative aspects of moral and metaphysical questions, as presented by such Roman Catholic members as Cardinal Manning, Dr W. G. Ward, Father Dalgairns; and such independent writers as Dean Stanley, Prof. H. Sidgwick, Mr R. H. Hutton and the Duke of Argyll.

That in a certain sense our great Laureate's poetry has nevertheless had a dissolving[1] influence upon the over-definite dogmatic creeds within hearing or upon the modes of religious thought amid which it was born, can hardly be doubted. In laying bare, as it does, the history of his own spirit, its conflicts and aspirations, its alternate eclipse of doubt and glow of faith, it has reported more than a personal experience: he has told the story of an age which he has thus brought into Self-knowledge. And as he has never for himself surrendered the traditional form of a devout faith, till he has seized its permanent spirit, and invested it with a purer glory, so has he saved it for others by making it fairer than they had dreamt. Among thousands of readers previously irresponsive to anything Divine he has created, or immeasurably intensified, the susceptibility of religious reverence.

I was aware that my last book did not meet with your father's approval. I need not say what support I should have found in his sympathy. The message, however, which he sent me, that his objection had reference not to the book itself but to the act of *publishing* it, somewhat consoled me; by showing that we differed less about the *quest* of truth than about its *presentation;* his tenderness towards others' beliefs leading him to favour an *esoteric* teaching distinct from the exoteric. So long as for certain subjects Latin remained the literary language of Europe it was easy to address a selected audience by writing *ad cleros* in Latin, *ad populum* in the *vernacular* tongue. But now that every book must be accessible to every reader, the choice lies between total suppression or free utterance of conviction. I cannot see that we are entrusted with any right of suppression when once profoundly convinced of a truth not yet within others' reach[2].

Yes, I know and glory in every line of "Akbar," except that I cannot, like Akbar, trust the "hand that rules" to "mould", or choose the "forms" of faith and worship that suit the needs of all the people.

Ever yours most truly, JAMES MARTINEAU.

[1] What I mean by "dissolving" is not *destroying* religious faith, but *releasing* it from imprisonment within tight propositions which *define the Infinite.* J. M.

[2] Dr Martineau's last book seemed to my father to be "founded on doubts rather than on profound convictions." T.

# CHAPTER VIII.

## HISTORICAL PLAYS.

### "QUEEN MARY" (*published* 1875).

"Queen Mary," the first play of what my father called his "historical trilogy" ("Harold," "Becket" and "Queen Mary"), was published in 1875. "This trilogy of plays," he notes, "pourtrays the making of England." In "Harold" we have the great conflict between Danes, Saxons and Normans for supremacy, the awakening of the English people and clergy from the slumber into which they had for the most part fallen, and the forecast of the greatness of our composite race.

In "Becket" the struggle is between the Crown and the Church for predominance, a struggle which continued for many centuries.

In "Mary" are described the final downfall of Roman Catholicism in England, and the dawning of a new age: for after the era of priestly domination comes the era of the freedom of the individual.

"In 'The Foresters,'" my father wrote, "I have sketched the state of the people in another great transition period of the making of England, when the barons sided with the people and eventually won for them the Magna Charta."

To begin publishing plays for the stage after he

was sixty-five years of age, was thought to be a hazardous experiment. He had, however, always taken the liveliest interest in the theatre; and he bestowed infinite trouble on his dramas, choosing these three great periods of 'Harold,' 'Becket,' and 'Mary,' so as to complete the line of Shakespeare's English chronicle-plays, which end with the commencement of the Reformation. He was quite alive to the fact that for him to attempt this dramatic work would be at first unpopular, since he was then mainly regarded as an Idyllic, or as a lyric, poet. But Spedding, a first-rate Shakespearian scholar, George H. Lewes and George Eliot admired his plays, and encouraged him to persevere in spite of all discouragement. He felt that he had the power; and even at the age of fourteen he had written plays which were "extraordinary for a boy," and full of vivid contrasts and striking scenic effects. All his life he enjoyed discovering the causes of historical and social movements; and had a strong desire to reverse unfair judgments, and an eager delight in the analysis of human motive and character. With the great dramas of ancient and modern times he was acquainted; hating in consequence the hideous realism and unreality of plays like "La Tosca"; but he believed in the future of our modern English stage when education should have made the masses more literary. "Clever enough but wants nature" was his criticism of much of the dramatic work in the present day. He regarded the drama as one of the most humanising of influences. He always hoped that the State, or the municipalities, as well as the public schools, would produce our great English historical plays, so that they might form part of the Englishman's ordinary educational curriculum. For himself he was aware that he wanted intimate knowledge of the mechanical details necessary for the modern stage; although in early and middle life he had been

a constant playgoer, and would keenly follow the action of a play, criticizing the characterization, incidents, scenic effects, situations, language and dramatic points. His dramas were written with the intention that actors should edit them for the stage[1], keeping them at the high poetic level; yet he did not always approve when they omitted those soliloquies and necessary episodes which reveal the character and, so to say, the mental action of a piece; nor did he speak favourably of some of the modern sensational *curtains*. He said that "The public are often left poised on the top of a wave, and the wave is not allowed to break"; that this might be modern theatrical art, but is entirely opposed to the canons of true literary dramatic art: and that the theatric and the dramatic were always being mistaken the one for the other[2].

He would observe that "Critics are so exacting now-a-days, that they not only expect a poet-playwright to be a first-rate author but a first-rate manager, actor and audience all in one." He said they did not consider that the conditions of dramatic art are much more complex than they were, and that to be a first-rate historical playwright means much more work than formerly, seeing that "exact history" has taken the place of the chance chronicle, and that a dramatist is expected to be cognisant of all the newest phases of contemporary drama.

As his "Queen Mary," "Cup," "Becket," "Falcon" and "Foresters" were all more or less successful on the stage, partly no doubt owing to the admirable

[1] Mary Anderson writes to me: "In reading 'The Cup' and 'The Foresters' Lord Tennyson showed by his remarks that he had the instincts of the true dramatist; and he moreover asked me to tell him of any lines that might seem to me to overweight the dramatic action of these plays. He thoroughly appreciated the need of action, and was ready to sacrifice even his *most* beautiful lines for the sake of a real dramatic effect."

[2] The same complaint was made by Fanny Kemble.

stage-management, I cannot but feel sorry that he did not add to his plays another which he had in his mind, "Simon de Montfort," wherein he would have pourtrayed some of his favourite historical characters, de Montfort, and the greatest of the Plantagenets, Edward, and Roger Bacon. The England of the thirteenth century, its great architecture, its Common Law, its new-made constitution (the archetype of all modern free constitutions), its literature, its Universities for rich and poor, moved him only less than "the spacious times of great Elizabeth." Both "The Cup" and "Becket" hold the stage, but whether these or his other plays will continue to do so is of course a question which only time can answer.

During 1874 and 1875 my father worked hard and unceasingly at his "Queen Mary," "more of a chronicle-play" he called it. The first list of books which he read on the subject is written down in his note-book: "Collier's *Ecclesiastical History*, Fuller's *Church History*, Burnet's *Reformation*, Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, Hayward's *Edward*, Cave's *P. X. Y.*, Hooker, Neale's *History of the Puritans*, Strype's *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, Strype's *Cranmer*, Strype's *Parker*, Philips' *Pole*, *Primitive Fathers No Papists*, Lingard's *History of England*, *Church Historians of England*, *Zürich Letters, and Original Letters and Correspondence of Archbishop Parker* (published by the Parker Society)," in addition to Froude, Holinshed and Camden.

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With respect to character-painting my father considered "Queen Mary" the most successful of his plays, but with his keen sense of truth always regretted that he had not, through lack of knowledge, done justice, as he thought, to Sir Thomas White, Lord Mayor of London.

The following remarks by Hutton seemed to him to bring out his own conceptions of the characters:

Almost all the characters who play a real part in the drama, however slightly touched, are clearly defined; Philip, whose disgust for the Queen is powerfully painted, but who remains otherwise something of a cold, cruel and sensual shadow, being perhaps in some degree an exception. Courtenay, Earl of Devon, the vain and flighty Catholic Plantagenet, "this prince of fluff and feather," as Lord Howard in speaking to Elizabeth calls him; Reginald Pole, the fair-weather Papal Legate, who shrinks alike from being persecuted and from persecuting, but is easily driven into the latter policy under fear of the former; Bishop Gardiner with his fierce Romanising dogmatism and his English hatred of Italian interference in English concerns,

> His big baldness,
> That irritable forelock which he rubs,
> His buzzard beak, and deep incavern'd eyes.

Bonner and his moral brutality, Lord Paget with the half-confessed Protestantism of his statesman's intellect, and yet that craving for English influence abroad which makes him support the alliance with Spain; Lord Howard, with his aristocratic Catholicism, his complete contempt for the vulgarity and ignorance of the new schismatics, and yet his thoroughly rooted antipathy to the bigotry of the sacerdotal spirit; Sir Thomas Wyatt, with his tasteful literary cravings, and the keen audacious soldier beneath them; Sir Ralph Bagenhall, with his bold, meditative insubordination and his hopelessness of active resistance; Sir Thomas White (the Lord Mayor), with his political indecision, and his wonderful dexterity at swaying the London Guilds directly the feather's weight has turned the scale which he is pleased to call his mind, so as to decide him on his own course; Cranmer with his somewhat questionable faith and courage, questionable we mean as regards historical fact, not questionable at all in Mr Tennyson's picture, his humility, penitence and sweetness; and lastly, the imaginary servants and peasants, both men and women, who are made parties to the drama,—these are all drawn with a firm hand and painted with a delicate touch. But the great characters of the piece are, as of course they ought to be, Mary and her half-sister Elizabeth,

whose star declines as the Catholic Queen's rises, and rises fair again as Mary's sets. Of course the portrait of Elizabeth is comparatively slight as compared with that of Mary, but though much less carefully filled in it is to the full as dramatic and life-like.

In few ages of the Christian era can the words "I came not to send peace but a sword" have been more sorrowfully verified than in the life of Mary Tudor. The wrong, done by her father to her mother and herself, was a sword that early pierced through Mary's own soul. She had, my father thought, been harshly judged by the popular verdict of tradition, therefore he had a desire to let her be seen as he pictured her in his imagination. Hence he was attracted toward the subject. He pitied the poor girl, who not only was cast down by her father from her high estate, but treated with shameless contumely by the familiar friends of her childhood. What wonder that a nature originally bright should thus have been clouded! He sympathised with her queenly courage, dramatically expressed by him, when, after her accession, triumphant over revolt, she flashes out with:

My foes are at my feet and Philip King.

He held that all allowance ought to be made for her, when, her high hopes for the Church and for the kingdom having been rekindled and quenched, the clouds of youth gathered again into a settled gloom. Throughout all history, he said, there was nothing more mournful than the final tragedy of this woman, who, with her deep longing for love, found herself hated by her people, abandoned by her husband: and harassed in the hour of death by the restlessness of despair[1].

[1] The well-known critic Mons. Augustin Filon writes in *Le Théâtre Contemporain* (1895): "Vienne une main pieuse qui dégage ces deux drames ("Queen Mary" and "Harold"), fasse circuler l'air et la lumière

The real difficulty of the drama, as my father was aware, is to give sufficient relief to its intense sadness, especially to the scenes in which Mary's devotion is repelled by Philip's coldness, consummated in that last scene, where she sits upon the ground, rocking herself to and fro, making her lament.

Nothing less than the holy calm of the meek and penitent Cranmer can be adequate artistic relief[1].

He pass'd out smiling, and he walk'd upright;
His eye was like a soldier's, whom the general
He looks to and he leans on as his God
Hath rated for some backwardness and bidd'n him
Charge one against a thousand, and the man
Hurls his soil'd life against the pikes and dies.

* * * *

The following close of the last act, which my father wrote in 1876 for the acting edition[2], he never printed, but left as a note:

After Mary's speech, ending "Help me hence."

[*She falls into the arms of Lady Clarence.*

*Alice.* The hand of God hath help'd her hence.

*Lady Clarence.* Not yet.

[*To Elizabeth as she enters.*

Speak, speak, a word of yours may wake her.

autour de leurs lignes essentielles; vienne un grand acteur qui compresse et incarne Harold, une grande actrice qui se passionne pour le caractère de Marie, et, sans effort, Tennyson prendra sa place parmi les dramaturges."

[1] Cf. the remarkable review in the *Times*, June 19th, 1875.

[2] As produced at the Lyceum Theatre with Irving as Philip, and Miss Kate Bateman as Queen Mary. Miss Bateman played some of her part finely, and Irving's "Philip" my father always pronounced to be a consummate performance, ranking it for powerful conception of character with Salvini's "Othello."

On the Australian stage Miss Dargon won a triumph in "Queen Mary." It was very popular when produced at the Melbourne Theatre Royal, and had a long run; and when reproduced at the Bijou Theatre in the same city had a second long run.

*Elizabeth* (*kneeling at her sister's knee*) Mary!

*Mary.* Mary! who calls? 'tis long since any one
Has called me Mary, she,
There in the dark she sits and calls for me,
She that should wear her state before the world.
My father's own true wife. Aye, madam. Hark!
For she will call again.

*Elizabeth.* Mary, my sister!

*Mary.* That's not the voice!
Who is it steps between me and the light?
[*Puts her arm round Elizabeth's neck.*
I held her in my arms a guileless babe,
And mourn'd her orphan doom along with mine.
The crown! she comes for that! take it and feel it!
It stings the touch! It is not gold but thorns!
[*Mary starts up.*
The crown of crowns! Play not with holy things!
[*Clasps her hands and kneels.*
Keep you the faith!...yea, Mother, yea, I come!
[*Dies.*

*Lady Clarence.* She is dead.

*Elizabeth* (*kneeling by the body*). Poor sister! Peace be with the dead. [*Curtain.*

## *Letters about "Queen Mary."*

### *From J. A. Froude.*

5 ONSLOW GARDENS,
*May 7th*, 1875.

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

I cannot trust myself to say how greatly I admire the play. Beyond the immediate effect, you'll have hit a more fatal blow than a thousand pamphleteers and controversialists; besides this you have reclaimed one more section of English History from the wilderness and given it a form in which it will

be fixed for ever. No one since Shakespeare has done that. When we were beginning to think that we were to have no more from you, you have given us the greatest of all your works. Once more I thank you for having written this book with all my heart.

Most truly yours, J. A. FROUDE.

*From Robert Browning.*

19 WARWICK CRESCENT, W.,
*June 30th*, 1875.

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

Thank you very much for "Queen Mary," the gift, and even more for "Queen Mary," the poem: it is astonishingly fine. Conception, execution, the whole and the parts, I see nowhere the shade of a fault, thank you once again! I am going to begin it afresh now. What a joy it is that such a poem should be, and be yours!

All affectionate regards to Mrs Tennyson from

Yours ever, ROBERT BROWNING.

Count Münster wrote about Prince Bismarck:

He now has real holidays at Varzin and has for a short time given up all public business, and told me that he has already read parts of "Queen Mary" with the greatest pleasure and admiration.

*From the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone.*

11 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE,
*June 30th*, 1875.

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

It was most kind in you to send me the book; and I wish I had or could have anything to cap it with that would not seem like a mocking echo.

However I am going to reprint in a volume my recent tracts and I shall perhaps make bold to send them to you.

Perhaps we may appear in the "Index" together.

I cannot but be glad that, in turning to historic times, you have struck a stroke for the nation. For my own personal share, I have found my interest in your work on this occasion enhanced and cumulated by the novelty of form and by having to enjoy a careful historic study. It must have cost you great pains to qualify for such an assemblage of portraits: of whom five or six at least are of personages whose names never can be effaced from our annals, nor do I know that Mary, Philip (in England), Gardiner or Cranmer have ever yet been fully drawn. The two last are still in a considerable degree mysteries to me! Was Cranmer a great weak man? Do great and weak contradict and include one another? He was certainly weak, I think, in the everlasting fluctuation of his opinions; for surely fluctuation of opinion had much to do with the six recantations. Elizabeth on the other hand was to my mind one of the great theologians of the period (who were exceedingly few) as well as the greatest among women-rulers. I think you may not dislike the following sentence from Jeremy Collier on Cranmer at the stake: "He seemed to repel the force of flames, and to overlook the torture by strength of thought."

My judgment is worthless, but I heartily congratulate you on the Poem, on the Study, and on the grace and ease with which you move in new habiliments.

Ever sincerely yours, W. E. GLADSTONE.

## *From Edward Fitzgerald.*

WOODBRIDGE, *July 9th*, 1875.

MY DEAR OLD ALFRED,

I had bought your Play a few days before your gift-copy reached me. I have not had sufficient time to digest either you see, though I have read through twice. I must leave it for the Papers and Magazines to judge in a few hours, what took you, I suppose, weeks and months in concocting. I

could speak of parts, I think: but not yet of the whole: and you can very well afford (can't you?) to wait till "The Great Twalmley" pronounces? One thing, I don't quite understand why you have so much relinquished "*thee*" and "*thou*" with their relative verbs for "*you*," etc. I know that we have had more than enough of "Thee" and "Thou" in modern Plays and Poems; but it should surely rule in the common *talk* of Mary's time. I suppose however that you have some very good reason for so often supplying the old form by the new.

Still your old Fitzcrotchet, you see, still! And so will be to the end, I suppose. I am not over-well just now, and see very little of books; all day on the river, and talking to the ducks and barndoors.

But ever yours the same,

"OLD FITZ."

## *From Sir Henry Bedingfeld, Bart.*

OXBURGH, STOKE FERRY,
*20th August*, 1875.

SIR,

As a great admirer of your genius, I eagerly read your drama "Queen Mary," but was so surprised and pained at the ignoble part which is allotted to Sir Henry Bedingfield, that I cannot refrain from addressing you on the subject. I feel justified in so doing, as I am the direct descendant of Sir Henry, and date from the house which was his home. The millions who will read "Mary Tudor," or witness the play on the stage, will carry away the impression that my ancestor was a vulgar yeoman in some way connected with the stables, whereas he was a man of ancient lineage, a trusted friend and servant of the Queen, who confided to him in time of danger the Lieutenancy of the Tower, and the custody of the Princess Elizabeth. This Princess so respected Sir Henry that, although she complained of his severity during her captivity, she visited him at Oxburgh after her accession to the Throne, and treated him with the greatest consideration. Numerous documents in my possession, including letters from the Sovereign, from the Privy Council, and from the most eminent men of the time, would

prove, were such proof required, the high position held by Sir Henry. I trust therefore to your feeling of justice, that you will, if possible, either strike out Sir Henry's name from future editions, or allot to him a more dignified part on the stage, and one which will convey a more correct view of his character and position.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

HENRY BEDINGFELD.

*Answer to Sir Henry Bedingfeld, Bart.*

FARRINGFORD, *April 15th*, 1876.

SIR,

Your letter arrived when I was abroad, else would have been answered at once: and therefore I waited till the play should be announced for acting. I had made your ancestor an honest gentleman tho' a rough one, as I found him reported to be, whether that were true or no; and I regret that you should have been pain'd by my representation of him. Now, in deference to your wishes, his name is not once mention'd on the stage, and he is call'd in the play-bill merely "Governor of Woodstock." Moreover I have inserted a line in Elizabeth's part, "Out, girl, you wrong a noble gentleman[1]."

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

A. TENNYSON.

It may be as well to insert here a letter from Robert Browning, written in April 1876, describing the production of "Queen Mary" on the stage. My father said that in his opinion Philip and Richard III were Irving's best parts.

[1] Sir Henry expressed himself satisfied with the explanation and the added line. T.

19 WARWICK CRESCENT, W.
*April 19th*, 1876.

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

I want to be among the earliest who assure you of the complete success of your "Queen Mary" last night[1]. I have more than once seen a more satisfactory performance of it, to be sure, in what Carlyle calls "the Private Theatre under my own hat," because there and then not a line nor a word was left out; nay, there were abundant "encores" of half the speeches: still whatever was left by the stage scissors suggested what a quantity of "cuttings" would furnish one with an after-feast.

Irving was very good indeed, and the others did their best, nor so badly.

The love as well as admiration for the author was conspicuous, indeed, I don't know whether you ought to have been present to enjoy it, or were not safer in absence from a smothering of flowers and deafening "tumult of acclaim," but Hallam was there to report, and Mrs Tennyson is with you to believe. All congratulations to you both from

Yours affectionately ever,

ROBERT BROWNING.

[1] One of the lines most applauded was:

"I am English Queen, not Roman Emperor";

which hit the temper of the London democracy, for the Queen had lately assumed the title of Empress of India.

## "HAROLD."

### (*Published* 1876.)

"Harold" my father called his "Tragedy of Doom," citing the scenes of the comet, Harold's shipwreck and capture, the oath, Edward's curse and death, the marriage and coronation of Harold and Aldwyth, and the great battle of Senlac.

Winds and waves, Harold's own acts, so alien to his nature, and even circumstances fight against him and yet he still holds to duty, nobleness and patriotism. The truthful Harold's false oath by the saints of Normandy gives the tragic unity to the action.

It becomes his avenging destiny. In his short career, it is what the inherited curse was to the house of Pelops. Harold can say in the true sense which Euripides meant, "My tongue has sworn, but my soul has not sworn." Nothing in the play seems to us finer than the contrast between Harold's own view of his predicament and the casuistry of the theologians who seek to re-assure him. He has a foreboding that he must suffer the immediate doom of the defiled; but beyond that doom he looks up to that Justice which shall give him the reward of the pure in spirit[1].

[1] From the review in the *Times*, Oct. 18th, 1876, by Professor Jebb. When my father was writing the notes to his poems, such as are often quoted throughout these chapters, he read this review, and thought that it contained most of what he had to say about "Harold" as a subject for drama. Harold's character he considered very ably drawn: "No historical character unites more completely than Harold all the elements of dramatic effect. His military genius, his civil virtues, his loyal and fearless championship of England against the dominion of strangers; his liberality, which has for its perpetual monument his secular foundation of Waltham; his frank and open bearing, in which prudent contemporaries blamed too slight a regard

In vain Harold defeats the Danes and his own treasonable brother Tostig who has brought them into England. The bloody victory does but weaken him in the struggle for supremacy with William.

In vain does he sacrifice his Edith and marry Aldwyth to secure, as he thinks, the aid of her brothers Edwin and Morcar. They stand aloof in his hour of need; and his own high courage itself does but expose him to the fatal arrow which seals his doom and that of England.

When we were at Battle Abbey in 1876, where my father wrote his prefatory sonnet to "Harold," we found a rising ground to the English right, and he pictured Edith and Stigand and the English canons of Waltham and the camp followers standing to watch the battle, and to catch a glimpse of their great Harold between the English standards which flapped high above the roof of flying arrows, and the deadly gleam of axes "that lightened with a single flash about the summit.' And when we saw the streams of tourists flowing over the lawns, and not seeming much to care for this mighty Harold or for the momentous field of Senlac, he turned to me and said

"Another England now we come and go,
A nation's fall has grown a summer show."

But those tragic days of the "nation's fall" were the prelude of a new birth for England, as Edward foresaw in his death-vision,—one of those passages in which my father thought he had been successful:

Then a great Angel past along the highest
Crying "the doom of England," and at once

for self-interest; his generous courage, which panegyrists could not wholly vindicate from the charge of rashness; his tall stature, his comely countenance, that mighty physical strength to which the pictures of the Bayeux tapestry bear witness—all these things make Harold a man fit to stand as the central figure of a drama."

He stood beside me, in his grasp a sword
Of lightnings, wherewithal he cleft the tree
From off the bearing trunk, and hurl'd it from him
Three fields away, and then he dash'd and drench'd,
He dyed, he soak'd the trunk with human blood,
And brought the sunder'd tree again, and set it
Straight on the trunk, that thus baptized in blood
Grew ever high and higher, beyond my seeing,
And shot out sidelong boughs across the deep
That dropt themselves, and rooted in far isles
Beyond my seeing: and the great Angel rose
And past again along the highest crying
"The doom of England!"

To meet the conditions of the modern drama, before writing "Harold" my father had studied many recent plays. He had also refreshed his mind with the dramas of Æschylus and Sophocles, which always seemed to him "full of noble reality and moral beauty."

It has been asked why in his historical trilogy he does not give free rein to his sense of humour; the answer is, he held that a certain formal humour was the only humour possible now-a-days in stage-tragedy, which in its rapid action does not allow scope for original humour; and that even this formal humour must be kept in strict subservience to the plot.

### *Letters about "Harold."*

### *From Henry W. Longfellow.*

CAMBRIDGE, *Dec. 21st*, 1876.

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

I have just been reading your "Harold" and am delighted with its freshness, strength and beauty. Like "Boadicea" it is a voice out of the Past, sonorous, strange, semi-barbaric. What old ancestor of yours is it thus speaking through you?

The Fifth Act is a masterly piece of dramatic writing. I know not where to look for anything better.

This being the shortest day of the year I make my letter correspond.

I wish you knew, I wish you could possibly know, the power of your poetry in this country. It would make your heart go forth towards the thirty or forty million of English on this side of the Atlantic.

With cordial congratulations on your great success, and kind remembrances,

Your friend and admirer,

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

*From Robert Browning.*

19 WARWICK CRESCENT, *Dec. 21st*, 1876.

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

True thanks again, this time for the best of Christmas presents, another great work, wise, good and beautiful. The scene where Harold is overborne to take the oath is perfect, for one instance. What a fine new ray of light you are entwining with your many coloured wreath!

I know the Conqueror's country pretty well: stood last year in his Castle of Bonneville, on the spot where tradition is that Harold took the oath; and I have passed through Dives, the place of William's embarcation, perhaps twenty times: and more than once visited the church there, built by him, where still are inscribed the names of the Norman knights who accompanied him in his expedition. You light this up again for me. All happiness befall you and yours this good season and ever.

Yours affectionately, R. BROWNING.

*Answer to Robert Browning.*

ALDWORTH, HASLEMERE.

*After-dinner talk between husband and wife.*

*W.* Why don't you write and thank Mr Browning for his letter?

*H.* Why should I? I sent him my book and he acknowledged it.

*W.* But such a great and generous acknowledgement.

*H.* That's true.

*W.* Then you should write: he has given you your crown of violets.

*H.* He is the greatest-brained poet in England. Violets fade, he has given me a crown of gold.

*W.* Well, I meant the Troubadour crown of golden violets; pray write: you know I would if I could; but I am lying here helpless and horizontal and can neither write nor read.

*H.* Then I'll go up and smoke my pipe and write to him.

*W.* You'll go up and concoct an imaginary letter over your pipe, which you'll never send.

*H.* Yes, I will. I'll report our talk.

He goes up and smokes, and spite of pipe writes and signs himself

A. TENNYSON.

*From Aubrey de Vere.*

*December 28th*, 1876.

MY DEAR ALFRED,

I do not like to defer longer sending you my most cordial thanks for sending me your "Harold." I have already read the whole of it twice, and many parts of it much oftener, and it is probably better that I should write with the general effect of the work still broad and plain on my mind, than after a minute analysis of details had to some extent clouded my estimate of it as a whole. You know how heartily I admired it when you read it aloud to me: and I can honestly assure you that that admiration has not been less on reading it to myself. On that first occasion it may have derived an advantage from your reading; but if so, the more careful attention one gives to what one reads with one's own eyes fully compensated for

whatever was lost. The great characteristic of this drama is to me that of an heroic strength blended with heroic simplicity, and everything in it harmonious with that predominant characteristic. Nearly all the characters are simple and the plot is eminently so. Perhaps the simplest of all the characters is that of Harold himself, and for that reason there is quite an extraordinary pathos in the malicious might of those circumstances which force his feet off the straight ways and into those perplexed paths for which they have no inclination. The extreme simplicity of the drama requires a corresponding amount of strength to make it effective, and a sort of Æschylean strength seems to me to belong to it everywhere, to its characters, its action, its passions, its style and diction, and to all its most remarkable passages. This strength increases to the end, and sums itself up in that grand battle-scene with its Latin "choruses" (as they might be called) which constitutes the chief part of the fifth Act. In Greece (and I suppose everywhere) Dramatic poetry came later than Narrative; and though more an expansion of the Choral Ode, yet in some of the earlier specimens retained something of an Epic character also; and I think that your Drama has something also of an Epic spirit combined with its dramatic form. It is a great thing to have had this wonderful crisis in our early English History added to our great dramatic gallery.

Ever affectionately yours,

AUBREY DE VERE.

*From Dean Stanley.*

DEANERY, WESTMINSTER,
*December 25th*, 1876.

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

I will gladly contrive if you wish to transmit your poem to the Queen. I know that Her Majesty is expecting it.

I ought ere this to have thanked you for my own copy. It cheered some mournful winter evenings for me, and it will, I trust, for the country at large, revive or rekindle the dying torch of Truth and the belief that there is something greater and nobler than capricious Norman Saints.

Yours sincerely, A. P. STANLEY.

*From Edward Fitzgerald.*

LOWESTOFT, *December 30th*, 1876.

MY DEAR OLD ALFRED,

"Harold" came, King Harold. But I still yearn after a Fairy Prince who came from other skies than these rainy ones, with his joyful eyes, "foxfooted step," and his mantle glittering on the rocks. Impute this to my old prejudice, childish taste, whatever you will, except my ceasing to be your loyal old Fitz.

I scarce know if it be worth writing to say this: you knew it all beforehand: still, I suppose it is proper to acknowledge such a present. At any rate it gives me an opportunity to wish you and yours all good for coming 1877, a wish that I think you would also guess without my writing. Here I have a book of old Spanish Romances familiar to Don Quixote and Sancho. I shall write you out a *rather* pretty one which I read yesterday, and remain

Yours as ever, E. F. G.

There is not much in it, if you take the trouble to construe; but I like the lady with her old husband partner, managing to address the young Count, perhaps as she passes him in the dance, bit by bit as the figure brings her round again.

*From G. H. Lewes.*

THE HEIGHTS, WITLEY,
GODALMING, *18th June*, 1877.

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

We have just read "Harold" (for the first time) and "Mary" (for the fourth) and greatly wished you had been here to read certain scenes, especially that masterly interview between Harold and William, or that most pathetic close of "Mary." It is needless for me to say how profound a pleasure both works have given us—they are great contributions! and your wretched critics who would dissuade you from enriching literature with such dramas must be forgiven, "for they know not what they say." It is not however to carry the coals of applause to your Newcastle that I scribble these lines, but to enquire whether there is a hope of your being at Blackdown this summer and of our seeing you?

Yours truly, G. H. LEWES.

## "BECKET."

(*Printed* 1879; *published* 1884.)

In 1879 my father printed the first proofs of his tragedy of "Becket," which he had begun in December 1876. But he considered that the time was not ripe for its publication; and this therefore was deferred until December 1884. We had visited Canterbury in August 1877, and gone over each separate scene of Becket's martyrdom. "Admirers of Becket," my father notes, "will find that Becket's letters, and the writings of Herbert of Bosham, Fitzstephen, and John of Salisbury throw great light on those days. Bishop Lightfoot found out about Rosamund for me."

The play is so accurate a representation of the personages and of the time, that J. R. Green said that all his researches into the annals of the twelfth century had not given him "so vivid a conception of the character of Henry II. and his court as was embodied in Tennyson's 'Becket.'"

To my father it was interesting to learn the impression made upon Roman Catholics by this work. He first asked the opinion of his neighbour at Freshwater, W. G. Ward. He could not have asked a more candid, truth-speaking critic than this "most liberal of all Ultramontanes," who was deeply versed not only in the spirit and doctrine of his own Church, but also in the modern French and English drama. My father

once said of Ward when speaking to a friend of Roman Catholic casuistry: "Well, one of the most truthful men I ever met was a strict Ultramontane: he was grotesquely truthful." They thoroughly understood each other, for Ward was "full of fun and faith." So it came to pass that my father often discussed religion and Roman Catholicism with him in their walks together. He once said to Ward, "You know you would try to get me put in prison if the Pope bid you." Ward replied, "The Pope would never tell me to do anything so foolish."

It may be imagined that we looked forward with some anxiety to the evening when Ward had promised to be at Farringford to hear "Becket." He came, as it afterwards appeared, to listen patiently, though convinced "that the whole play would be out of his line." At the end of the play he broke out into enthusiastic praise. "Dear me! I did not expect to enjoy it at all. It is splendid! How wonderfully you have brought out the phases of his character as Chancellor and Archbishop! Where did you get it all?"

Struggle for power under one guise or another has doubtless been among the most fruitful sources of theme for tragedy. During many centuries, as we know, "spiritual power," clothed in earthly panoply, seemed to most men to be the one embodiment of the Divine Power. What struck Ward in my father's play was the clear and impressive manner in which he had brought out Becket's feeling that in accepting the Archbishopric he had changed masters, that he was not simply advanced to a higher service of the same liege lord, but that he had changed his former lord paramount, whose fiery self-will made havock of his fine intellect, for one of higher degree; and had become a power distinct from and it might be antagonistic to the King. Thus Becket says, still loving his old friend:

The worldly bond between us is dissolved,
Not yet the love: can I be under him
As Chancellor? as Archbishop over him?

My father's view of Becket was as follows: Becket was a really great and impulsive man, with a firm sense of duty, and, when he renounced the world, looked upon himself as the head of that Church which was the people's "tower of strength, their bulwark against throne and baronage." This idea so far wrought in his dominant nature as to betray him into many rash acts; and later he lost himself in the idea. His enthusiasm reached a spiritual ecstasy which carries the historian along with it; and his humanity and abiding tenderness for the poor, the weak and the unprotected, heighten the impression so much as to make the poet feel passionately the wronged Rosamund's reverential devotion for him (most touchingly rendered by Ellen Terry), when she kneels praying over his body in Canterbury Cathedral[1].

As a stage tragedy (adapted by Irving) Irving has told us that "Becket" is one of the three most successful plays produced by him at the Lyceum. "'Becket' is a finer play than 'King John,'" he wrote to my father. Palgrave has observed that "Becket" has two excellent characteristics of the old Greek drama, that of bringing the four protagonists prominently throughout before the audience: and that of introducing the crisis of the tragedy in a scene of first-rate comedy. Irving's arrangement has been criticised as too episodical; but the thread of human interest remains strong enough for its purpose, as from first to last it holds the audience in an attitude of rapt attention. Assuredly Irving's interpretation of the many-sided, many-mooded, statesman-soldier-saint was as vivid and as subtle a piece of acting as has been seen in our day.

[1] In the play Rosamund is the king's wife by a left-handed marriage.

He says truly that one of the chief keynotes of the character is to be found in the following lines, which he always gave with an indescribable tenderness, as if looking back to and recalling the daydream of his youth.

*Becket.* There was a little fair-hair'd Norman maid,
Lived in my mother's house: if Rosamund is
The world's rose, as her name imports her—she
Was the world's lily.
*John of Salisbury.* Ay, and what of her?
*Becket.* She died of leprosy.
*John of Salisbury.* I know not why
You call these old things back again, my lord.
*Becket.* The drowning man, they say, remembers all
The chances of his life, just ere he dies.

In 1879 Irving refused the play: but in 1891 he asked leave to produce it, holding that the taste of the theatre-going public had changed in the interval, and that it was now likely to be a success on the stage.

He writes to me (1893):

We have passed the fiftieth performance of "Becket," which is in the heyday of its success. I think that I may, without hereafter being credited with any inferior motive, give again the opinion which I previously expressed to your loved and honoured father. To me "Becket" is a very noble play, with something of that lofty feeling and that far-reaching influence, which belong to a "passion play." There are in it moments of passion and pathos which are the aim and end of dramatic art, and which, when they exist, atone to an audience for the endurance of long acts. Some of the scenes and passages, especially in the last act, are full of sublime feeling, and are with regard to both their dramatic effectiveness and their poetic beauty as fine as anything in our language. I know that such a play has an ennobling influence on both the audience who see it and the actors who play in it[1].

[1] Professor Stanford's incidental music has not received the credit which it deserves, for it is eminently artistic and imaginative.—His identification of Becket with the Gregorian melody "Telluris ingens conditor" is particularly impressive.

Some of the last lines which my father ever wrote are at the end of the Northampton scene, an anthem-speech written for Irving.

The voice of the Lord is in the voice of the people.
The voice of the Lord is on the warring flood,
And He will lead His people into peace!
The voice of the Lord will shake the wilderness,
The barren wilderness of unbelief!
The voice of the Lord will break the cedar-trees,
The Kings and Rulers that have closed their ears
Against the Voice, and at their hour of doom
The voice of the Lord will hush the hounds of Hell
In everlasting silence.

The story of Henry and Rosamund had long ago attracted him, and the germ of the play is to be found in a little song written before 1842.

*Rosamund's Bower.* (*Unpublished.*)

*Rosamund loquitur.*

What rustles hither in the dark?
A step? a footfall? What is that I hear?
The night is black and still; the deer
Bleat as with human voices in the park.
Is it the king? is it my love
Coming along the secret ways?
The man that round me wove
Inextricable brickwork maze in maze?

It is not he; far off from England's shore,
He comes no more.
An idle hope was in my breast,
My hope is false, my terror's true!
I shudder in my lonely nest,
And think a cunning hand has found the clue—
God be gracious to my soul!

*Letters about "Becket."*

*Dedication to the Lord Chancellor (Selborne).*

MY DEAR SELBORNE,

To you, the honoured Chancellor of our own day, I dedicate this dramatic memorial of your great predecessor;—which, altho' not intended in its present form to meet the exigencies of our modern theatre, has nevertheless, for so you have assured me, won your approbation.

Ever yours, TENNYSON.

*From the Earl of Selborne.*

30 PORTLAND PLACE.

I have been prostrated for several days by a feverish cold, and when your present of "Becket" arrived here on Monday was not in a fit state to write.

But I can no longer delay thanking you for it and for the dedication. All of us, I suppose, who have so far come out conquerors in the great internal struggles of life as to have been enabled to play some part, in the hope that it may be for good, in the world, must share in the natural feeling of the ancients, who did not look upon death as Christians do, that there would be something, not the mere memory of places, offices or titles, and still less pompous memorials, to rescue our names from the obscurity and virtual oblivion which history has in store for all but a very few of those whose inner lives are as little known as mine. This makes me accept your dedication as the greatest real honour that has ever been done me: that you should be my *vates sacer* and let those remote generations of the best spirits among the English-speaking race, who will read your works, know that there was something in me which had won your friendship and esteem, is more than I could have hoped for.

Believe me ever affectionately yours,

SELBORNE.

*From The Right Honourable J. Bryce.*

As I have been abroad for some time it was only a little while ago that I obtained and read your "Becket." Will you, since you were so kind as to read me some of it last July, let me tell you how much enjoyment and light it has given me? Impressive as were the parts read, it impresses one incomparably more when studied as a whole. One cannot imagine a more vivid, a more perfectly faithful picture than it gives both of Henry and of Thomas. Truth in history is naturally truth in poetry; but you have made the characters of the two men shine out in a way which, while it never deviates from the impression history gives of them, goes beyond and perfects history. This is eminently conspicuous in the way their relations to one another are traced; and in the delineation of the influence on Thomas of the conception of the Church, blending with his own haughty spirit and sanctifying it to his own conscience. There is not, it seems to me, anything in modern poetry which helps us to realize, as your drama does, the sort of power the Church exerted on her ministers: and this is the central fact of the earlier middle ages. I wish you were writing a play on Hildebrand also. Venturing to say this to you from the point of view of a student of history, I scarcely presume to speak of the drama on its more purely literary side, how full of strength and beauty and delicacy it is, because you must have heard this often already from more competent critics.

Believe me always sincerely yours,

J. BRYCE.

# CHAPTER IX.

## REMINISCENCES BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE W. E. H. LECKY.

From 1874 to 1880 I have but few notes, except about our visits to London. Mr Lecky, however, has kindly supplied me with the following recollections of this period:

You ask me to put down a few recollections of your father. It is with some difficulty that I do so, for many years have passed since I had the privilege of being much with him, and I knew too well his deep hatred of the common fashion of journalising in a great man's house, and writing down for future publication the careless utterances of free conversation, to be guilty of such an act. I must rely wholly on my memory, and I am afraid that to you, who knew him so much better than I did, these few notes can be of little use.

It was towards the close of the sixties that I had first the honour of knowing your father, and he invited me to accompany him to Farringford. We spent the night at Winchester, and next day went together over the cathedral, and visited the nonagenarian Dean Garnier, whose gracious courtesy in extreme old age, and whose solemn words of blessing as he said farewell to your father, still remain vividly in my memory. In many days at Farringford, on this and other later occasions, I came to know your father well, and long walks with him gave me much insight into his ways of thinking and feeling. His natural shyness seemed to me to have been afterwards considerably mitigated by periods of residence in London, but when I first knew him it was very apparent, and it was a good deal aggravated by his great short-sightedness. I well remember in one of our first walks his alarm at a flock of sheep which he

took for tourists. There always seemed to me to be a strange and somewhat pathetic contrast between his character and his position. Nature evidently intended him for the life of the quietest and most secluded of country gentlemen, for a life spent among books and flowers and a few intimate friends, and very remote from the noise and controversies of the great world. Few men valued more highly domestic privacy. But a great gift had made his name a household word among the English race. True privacy, as he bitterly complained, became impossible to him, and troops of tourists, newspaper writers and interviewers were constantly occupied with his doings.

It was a surprise to me to find that he possessed a strong sense of humour, delighted in witty stories and told them admirably. This was a side of his nature which never, I think, appeared in his writings before "The Northern Farmer," which was published early in the sixties.

I found too that he was not only a great poet, but also the best critic of verse I had ever known. His ear for all the delicacies of rhythm has, I suppose, very seldom been equalled. He had an admirable verbal memory for the poetry of others as well as for his own, and he had the true instinct of genius in detecting among commonplace surroundings some happy phrase or some original metaphor. His taste lay chiefly in sixteenth and seventeenth century poetry, in which he was widely read, and which he used to quote with admirable power. I can still remember the almost terrible force he threw into the noble lines of Rochester on the "Vanity of Human Reason."

> "Reason, an *ignis fatuus* of the mind,
> Which leaves the light of Nature, sense behind,
> Pathless and dangerous wandering ways it takes,
> Through Error's fenny bogs and thorny brakes;
> While the misguided follower climbs with pain
> Mountains of whimsies heaped in his own brain.
> Till Old Age and Experience hand in hand
> *Lead* him to Death and *make* him understand,
> After a search so painful and so long,
> That *all* his life he has been in the wrong."

In eighteenth century poetry he especially admired Burns, whom he placed, I think, on almost as high a level as Carlyle did, and his admiration was rather increased than diminished by

the skill with which Burns, by a few strokes of genius, immortalised so many of the old songs of Scotland and incorporated great parts of them in his own poetry. "Burns did for the old songs of Scotland," he said, "almost what Shakespeare had done for the English drama that preceded him." Among nineteenth century poets I think he placed Keats on the highest pinnacle. He maintained (like Landor) that he had more of the real gift even than Shelley, and he thought it difficult to over-estimate the height to which he might have risen if he had lived. Byron he seemed to place on a lower level, and he considered his poetry too much akin to rhetoric. In discussing him I once quoted the exquisite passage in "The Giaour" beginning,

"He who hath bent him o'er the dead
Ere the first day of death is fled,"

comparing Greece to the dead man in the moment after death. Your father admitted its beauty, but said that to his taste the idea was too beaten out. "A Greek poet would have conveyed it by a single stroke. He would have said 'The face of the land is as the smile of the dead.'" He lamented that Campbell in "The Battle of the Baltic" had spoilt the intense reality and truthfulness of one of the noblest patriotic odes in the language by one false and jarring note:

"And the mermaid's song condoles."

He admired much the plays of his old friend Henry Taylor, but complained that they were too uniformly stately, that he "never laid aside the cothurnus."

We naturally talked much about his own poetry. He said that he had great difficulty about a subject and a framework, a definite beginning and ending, but when these were found composition cost him very little trouble. "Guinevere," perhaps the most perfect of his "Idylls," was written in a fortnight. He had written out parts of the last "Idylls" in old English prose before turning them into verse. A letter once appeared in the *Spectator* written by Mr Knowles, who at that time was scarcely known in the literary world, representing King Arthur as conscience, and treating the "Idylls" as an allegory or picture of the different ways in which men looked on conscience, some reverencing it as a heaven-born king, others ascribing to it a purely earthly origin, while others simply obeyed it without

forming any theory about its source. Your father gave me this letter, saying that it was the best account that had yet been given of his poem. I confess, however, that in spite of a beautiful image in "Guinevere" which seems to corroborate this view I have always thought that the allegory must have been in a great measure an afterthought. He had originally intended to write twelve "Idylls," one for each knight of the Round Table. He mentioned as an illustration of the uncertainty of critical judgments, that while the great majority of his critics complained that the "Idylls" had deteriorated after the first series, Fitzgerald, the author of the translation of "Omar Khayyám," whose opinion he valued very highly, steadily maintained that "The Holy Grail" was the best of them all.

In his conversation that minutely accurate observation of nature which is so conspicuous in his poetry, was very evident. He had a strong sense of the force and rhythm of words, and his knowledge of old English and of vivid provincial expressions was very great. "How infinitely superior," he said, "is the provincial word *flitter-mouse* to the orthodox *bat!*" With his love for old English he combined some taste for old forms of pronunciation. He once rebuked me for pronouncing "knowledge" in the way which is now usual, maintaining that the full sound of "know" should be given. I defended myself by quoting Swift's lines on the Irish Parliament:

> "Not a bow-shot from the college,
> Half the world from sense and knowledge,"

but he only said he hoped I would never pronounce the word in this way in reading his poetry.

He had no kind of sympathy with the theory which would divorce art from morals, and I have known no literary man who had a more uniformly high sense of duty in connection with his work. It was a sense of duty not only to the living and the unborn, but also, and in a very marked degree, to the dead. In speaking of the character of Becket, I remember his expressing the dread he always felt, lest he should do some injustice to the actions or motives of those who are in their graves. He hated with an intense hatred all literary quarrels, and rivalries, and jealousies, and his literary judgment seemed to me not only singularly sane and unexaggerated, but also singularly unbiassed by his personal likings. On the other

hand, his many and close friendships had little or nothing to say to literary affinities. Carlyle, who never cared for his poetry, and indeed seemed always to think that he would have done better to have written in prose, was one of his oldest and most valued friends. Many persons spoke of your father as too much occupied with his own poetry. It did, no doubt, fill a very large place in his thoughts, and it is also true that he was accustomed to express his opinions about it with a curiously childlike simplicity and frankness. But at bottom, his nature seemed to me singularly modest. No poet ever corrected so many lines in deference to adverse criticism. His sensitiveness seemed to me curiously out of harmony with his large powerful frame, with his manly dark colouring, with his great massive hands and strong square-tipped fingers. It is probable, however, that it was closely connected with the gift that made him so delicate an interpreter of the finer shades of feeling, and also with the extreme tenderness of nature with which he shrank from all infliction of suffering. He once told me the well-known story of how some mischievous men made a bet that they would drive a strong young farmer of their acquaintance in alarm to his bed, and how they succeeded by coming to him one by one, inquiring with well simulated anxiety about his health, deploring his bad looks, asking him if he felt no strange sensation, and entreating him to take care of himself, and he owned that a few friends could in the same way persuade him that anything he wrote was worthless. The popularity of his poems sometimes seemed to bewilder him, and I have heard him gravely express his belief that it was largely due to his official position as Laureate.

As is always the case with great writers, resemblances to something he had written were often found in books which he had never read, and in languages which he did not know, and he complained with much reason that there were critics who imagined that the same idea could never occur independently to two men looking on the same aspects of Nature. "Tennyson suspected of plagiarism!" I once heard Browning say, when this subject was mentioned: "Why, you might as well suspect the Rothschilds of picking pockets." He had, however, the skill which most great writers possess, of drawing knowledge and thought from all about him. Among his friends was Mr G. F. Watts, and though your father, I think, had little real technical

knowledge of art he fully *felt* the charm of that great imaginative painter. He once asked Mr Watts to describe his ideal of what a true portrait-painter should be, and he embalmed the substance of Mr Watts's reply in some of the noblest lines in the "Idylls[1]."

> As when a painter, poring on a face,
> Divinely, thro' all hindrance, finds the man
> Behind it, and so paints him that his face,
> The shape and colour of a mind and life,
> Lives for his children, ever at its best—

Freshwater society, in the days of which I am writing, had a singular charm. Among the permanent residents in the neighbourhood were Mr Watts, Mr Ward the well-known Catholic metaphysician and reviewer, and that true artist and most gifted woman Mrs Cameron. Miss Thackeray made many long visits. Sir John Simeon ("the prince of courtesy" of a very beautiful poem) sometimes came over from Swainston, and Farringford received many illustrious visitors from London, Oxford and Cambridge. Among the strangers who stayed there was Longfellow, for whom your father conceived a deep affection, and whom he described as one of the most enchanting of men. There was a delightful flavour in the house of the best intellectual society mingling with the tastes and habits of the most genuine country life. The country, however, always seemed to predominate, and some of us were made duly conscious of our town ignorance by the searching questions that were put to us about the flowers and trees which your father knew so well and loved so much. I remember myself once falling into some disgrace when having judiciously confessed my ignorance in many cases, I too confidently pronounced a flower to be a cowslip which was in truth an oxlip; and your father declared that he had persuaded one charming town-bred lady, to whom he was much attached, that a common daisy was a peculiar kind of rhododendron only found in the Isle of Wight. Apart from poetry there were several subjects on which he had read widely. He followed with keen and intelligent interest the great scientific discoveries of the day, and he delighted in

[1] My father had thought of writing for his last volume a poem to Watts on his great imaginative pictures, and on their common love of the golden spring crocus.

travels and natural history. His later works were largely historical, and he read for them very conscientiously.

Your father thought much about religious matters, and often dwelt with great force on his intuitive conviction of immortality, with its corollaries of Theism and Providence. These beliefs he held very strongly, but they were, I think, wholly detached in his mind from the dogmas of particular creeds. He had a decided leaning to some kinds of metaphysics, and the writings of James Hinton especially came home to him in a way which I could not share, or indeed understand. As all attentive readers of his poetry will have perceived, he was much occupied with, and disturbed by, the subversive theories that were abroad, but chiefly I think on account of their bearing on the great primal beliefs which I have mentioned, which he believed to be the main pillars on which the goodness, happiness and dignity of man must ultimately rest. Among his poems relating to these subjects the one which fascinated me the most was "Lucretius," in which he described with wonderful skill and subtlety the feelings of a convinced Materialist, who, having drunk the love-potion which his wife had given him, sees palpable visions of what seemed spirit-forms around him, and at last cuts the knot of his perplexity by suicide; and who when his wife confessed what she had done, died without a word of anger or reproach in his firm belief that all human actions are linked together in a chain of inexorable necessity. I do not think, however, that your father altogether approved of my preference, and when I quoted with admiration the lines:

> Poor little life that toddles half an hour
> Crown'd with a flower or two, and there an end—

he said that my liking for them only showed the morbidness of my nature.

My memory of your father goes back to many different scenes, to the garden and downs of Farringford, to the lovely terrace at Aldworth, to great uninteresting London crowds, in which I think he was much out of his element, to small dinners with Browning and a few other congenial spirits. I was once with him at the Lyceum at a representation of "The Cup," to which he had just added a new passage, and when between the acts Ellen Terry came into the box where we were sitting, I was much struck with the skill and judgment of his criticism of the

acting. Perhaps, however, the most pleasing recollection of all is our journey together to Salisbury. I had been staying at Farringford, and was going thence to visit Stonehenge, which I had never seen, when about a quarter of an hour before the time of starting your father very unexpectedly declared that he would accompany me. You will remember the two lovely May-days (in 1879) we spent in visiting Stonehenge, and Salisbury cathedral, and Amesbury, the last home of Guinevere, and George Herbert's church, and the great Vandykes at Wilton. Carlyle and Emerson once made the same excursion, and Emerson has described it in his *English Traits*. We knew or visited no one, and the gardens of Wilton, where we long sat together, were a perfect dream of beauty. It is one of those recollections which abide with one for a life, and it never rose more vividly before me than when twelve years later I stood by your father's coffin in Westminster Abbey.

# CHAPTER X

## ALDWORTH AND LONDON.

### 1874–1879.

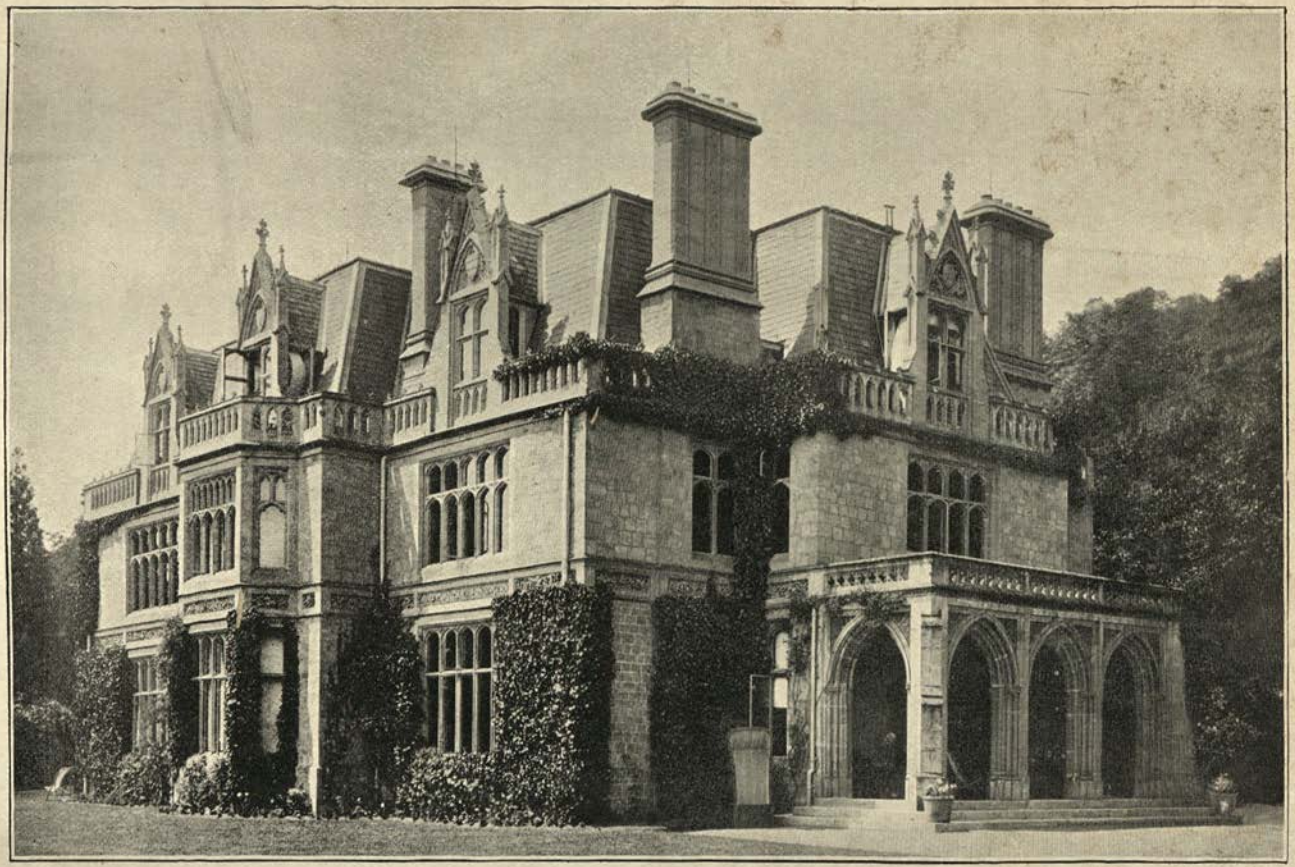
Farringford he never forsook, though he added another home to it; and assuredly no poet has ever before called two such residences his own. Both of them were sweetened by the presence there, so graciously prolonged, of her to whom the lovers of Song owe so deep a debt of gratitude. The second home was as well chosen as the first. It lifted England's great poet to a height from which he could gaze on a large portion of that English land which he loved so well, see it basking in its most affluent summer beauty, and only bounded by "the inviolate sea." Year after year he trod its two stately terraces with men the most noted of their time, statesmen, warriors, men of letters, science and art, some of royal race, some famous in far lands, but none more welcome to him than the friends of his youth. Nearly all of those were taken from him by degrees; but many of them stand successively recorded in his verse. The days which I passed there yearly with him and his were the happiest days of each year. They will retain a happy place in my memory during whatever short period my life may last: and the sea-murmurs of Freshwater will blend with the sighing of the woods around Aldworth, for me, as for many more worthy, a music, if mournful, yet full of consolation.

*MS Note, Aubrey de Vere.*

In April 1874 the regular journal, giving the bare facts of our daily life, which my father had wished my mother to keep for his private use, comes to an end, so that I have no longer this on which to depend for the exact date as to days.

Owing to my mother's illness I did not return to Cambridge after the Christmas of 1875, but remained at home as my father's secretary, a capacity in which there was much to be done.

Yet he would willingly have set me free for a more



ALDWORTH

*From a Photograph by Poulton & Son*

definite career; and at one time he consulted Mr Gladstone as to my taking up a political life. Gladstone wrote in answer that my father must recollect that a political life was "surrounded by an adamantine wall," that a man in politics was apt to "lose the finer moral sense," and that the political outlook ahead was "full of storms."

Our life did not undergo much change. We stayed at Farringford, as of late, till the end of June or the beginning of July, and then went to Aldworth. That fine air effectually cured my father's summer hay-fever: and he could now thoroughly enjoy his walks and drives in the beautiful country round Blackdown and Haslemere.

Two places he particularly liked. One was "Waggoner's Wells" on Hindhead, where he wrote his "Flower in the crannied wall," and of which George Eliot said to him, "What a good place for a murder in a novel!" The other was the "Silent Pool" near Albury, beneath the Merrow downs that look over Guildford. I have often heard him describe this pool—"The splendour and ripply play of light on the stream as it gushes from the chalk over the greensand bottom, the mackerel colours which flit about in the sunshine, and the network of the current on the surface of the pool like crystal smoke." "The water itself," he said, "was like what Keats says of Neptune's cave, the 'palace floor breath-air.'"

The motto he proposed for a new sundial in his garden was the old "Horas non numero nisi serenas." As years went by he became calmer and more restful in himself. To plant new trees, and to watch the growth of what were already planted, continued to be unfailing sources of pleasure to him. His hours of work were somewhat changed, Sir Andrew Clark having insisted on his walking before luncheon, and resting afterwards.

With his crook-handled stick, and accompanied by

my brother, or myself, or a friend, and by a dog, he would tramp over hill and dale, not caring if the weather were fair or foul, every now and then stopping in his rapid walk to give point to an argument or to an anecdote. When alone with me, he would often chant a poem that he was composing, and add fresh lines. There was the same keen eye as of old for strange birds and flowers, and, as of old, he would make a point of looking up a strange bird or a new flower as soon as he returned home from his walk. If a tourist were seen coming towards him, he would flee: for many would recognize from a distance his broad-brimmed wideawake (the kind of hat that Carlyle, Sir Henry Taylor, and others of his contemporaries wore) and his short blue cape with velvet collar, and would deliberately make for him in order to put some question. His hours were quite regular: he breakfasted at 8, lunched at 2, dined at 7. At dessert, if alone, he would read to himself, or if friends were in the house, he would sit with them for an hour or so, and entertain them with varied talk. He worked chiefly in the morning over his pipe, or in the evening after his pint of port, also over his pipe. Rare books or books with splendid bindings he never cared for; yet he treasured his first edition of Spenser's *Faery Queen*, and his second edition of *Paradise Lost*. He would read over and over again his favourite authors, and his delight was genuine when he came across a new author who "seemed to have something in him." He was not unfrequently abstracted in mood for days while he was composing, which made him appear brusque to strangers, but alone with his family he was never so happy as when engaged on a great subject. His very directness and simplicity moreover caused him sometimes to be misunderstood. With strangers doubtless he was shy at first, owing mostly to his short-sight, though none could be more

genial when he thawed. No one could have been more tolerant of or more gracious to dull people; and out of his imaginative large-heartedness he usually invested everyone with higher qualities than he or she possessed. As Jowett observed, "he would sit by a very commonplace person, telling stories with the most high-bred courtesy, endless stories not too high or too low for everyday conversation." With the country folk he loved to converse; especially seeking out the poor *old* men, from whom he always tried to ascertain their thoughts upon death and the future life.

His afternoons he generally spent on one of our smaller lawns, surrounded by birch and different sorts of pine and fir and cypress, after the fashion of separate green parlours. Here he would read the daily papers or some book to my mother lying out in her sofa-chair, or would receive friends from the neighbourhood, or would talk to guests staying in the house.

By degrees luncheon became later, partly because of the two hours' walk which had been ordered in the morning, and partly because of the trains which brought friends from London; and not seldom he went to town.

In March 1875 I find a note after he had seen Irving in *Hamlet:* "It is not a perfect Hamlet: the pathetic side of him well done, and the acting original. I liked it much better than Macready's. Irving came into the box, and we had a talk: he is a taking man."

In the summer my mother had sufficiently recovered to go with my father, my brother and myself to Pau, whence my father[1] and I made a tour in the Western Pyrenees. At Pau, meanwhile, Lionel became engaged to Eleanor Locker, whom as a child we had known well,

[1] On this journey he took Balzac's novels with him, especially delighting in *Le père Goriot* and *Eugénie Grandet.*

and who was like one of our own family. The engagement had not been in any way foreseen; but it was as welcome as so anxious an event can be to those whose life has been with and for their children. My father writes thus to the Duke of Argyll:

MY DEAR DUKE,

I had my garden gravelled when I made the terrace in front of the house at Aldworth. Many cartloads came over the hill. I should think it more probable that the flint found by you was dropt there, than that it had been left there since the denudation.

Tell the Duchess if she do not know it that Lionel, my youngest son, is engaged to Miss Eleanor Locker, who is half a Bruce and half a "London Lyric." The Queen has been very kind about it; we have known her from a child and approve of her heartily; but as he is only twenty-one they must wait till he get some employment, of which at present I see small prospect.

I trust the Duchess is bearing the winter well.

With our love to her, yours ever,

A. TENNYSON.

On our return to Farringford Mrs Procter came to visit us, and wrote after:

I cannot tell you what a happy time we had at Farringford. If I am not better for it, I ought to be; talking with A. T. seemed to lift me out of the earth-earthy. It was like what a retreat is to the religious.

In November[1] 1875 my father said: "I know it is the custom to prophesy change in France, but I am not so

[1] See Appendix, p. 526, for translations of Franklin epitaph sent to him by Gladstone this November.

sure that the Republic, which M. Rouher denounced, will not surprise many of them in its duration. They can have perpetual change of their men in power now."

December brought Edward Fitzgerald's usual Christmas letter.

MY DEAR ALFRED,

The time of year has come about when I have earned a right to hear a little about you all—Mrs Tennyson especially. But I suppose I must wait till one of your boys is at home; which must soon be, for here is Christmas close by. Then a son must write me a bit of a letter. You know that I wish you all well and happy at Christmas and after. I have been told of Mrs Leslie Stephen's death, which must be a terrible thing for Annie Thackeray. Only about a fortnight ago she was telling me by letter what a sister she had.

As Spedding and Pollock (whom I asked about it) told me they had given their names to the Carlyle conspiracy, so did I, much wondering how Masson came to know of my existence. But I must say I thought the whole thing rather a cockney affair—*Address and Medal and White Satin Scroll,* which some dozen years ago, I think Carlyle would have been tempted to blow his nose upon, as the Sandwich Islanders did with their playbills at the Theatre. Only I never did see Carlyle use a handkerchief.... It is fine of him to be eighty: I shall write him also my best 1875 letter. He seems to have passed the summer cheerfully and well in Kent. I see — has another of his uncouth works out: I call him the great Prophet of the Gargoyle School: in France they have a man equally disagreeable to me—Victor Hugo. I think it partly is because the beautiful things have been done from the time of the Greeks to A. T., and so those who can't do them better prove their originality by descanting on the Ugly; and they have their day. And I am your sincere and trusty old bedesman,

E. F. G.

In September 1876 my father and I visited Fitzgerald at Woodbridge. He was affectionate, genial, and humorous, declaring that the captain of his lugger was

one of the greatest of men. The views that Fitz expressed to me on literature were original and interesting, but the old man never got off his own platform to look at the work of modern authors. He had always wanted men like Thackeray and my father to go along with his crotchets, which were many. He had not been carried away by their genius out of himself and out of his own old Cambridge critical groove; and had not, like them, grown with the times. After we had arrived home he wrote:

WOODBRIDGE, *Sept. 26th*, 1876.

I am glad you were pleased with your short visit here. Perhaps you will one day, one or both of you, come again: and, if you will but give warning, and no nieces are in possession of the house, it shall be ready for you, and some *tender* meat provided. Somehow I, when you were gone, felt somewhat abroad, and a few hours after went to an old village by the sea, Dunwich, once a considerable town, now swept into the sea, with the remains of a church on the cliff and the walls of an ancient priory beside. I was wishing that I had made you come with me, over a stretch of wild heath too, but there was no room in the little Inn: and dare say *very tough meat! That* fatal reed sticks in my side you see. But I am still yours, and all yours, sincerely,

E. F. G.

In October we stayed with the Gladstones at Hawarden, my father accepting the invitation thus:

*October 25th*, 1876.

On Monday then, if all be well. As you are good enough to say that you will manage anything rather than lose my visit, will you manage that I may have my pipe in my own room whenever I like?

The talk between Gladstone and my father was on Dante, "Harold," Gladstone's late speech about

remitting the Income Tax, modern morality, the force of public opinion, the evils of materialism and the new Biblical criticism.

My father expressed the view that, "as the English language is much finer than the Italian for variety of sound, so Milton for sound is often finer than Dante." He quoted Milton, Virgil, Dante and Homer[1] to illustrate his meaning; then said:

"What, for example, can be more monotonous than the first lines of the 'Inferno' with their '*a-s*'?

'Nel mezzo del cammin di nostr*a* vit*a*
Mi ritrov*a*i per un*a* selv*a* oscur*a*,
Chè l*a* diritt*a* vi*a* er*a* smarrit*a*'—

and so on."

After the visit my father wrote from Farringford:

MY DEAR MRS GLADSTONE,

Here we are returned to our winter-quarters, which however we find at present colder than Aldworth. We retain golden memories of our visit to Hawarden, and your statesman, not like Diocletian among his cabbages but among his oaks, axe in hand. Has he anything to say about my drama ("Harold")?

Always yours, A. TENNYSON.

Gladstone answered:

It seems to me you have worked the history up to the acme of its capability... I propose to quote, but without acknowledgement, in an article for the current *Contemporary Review* about the Hellenic part of the Eastern Question the two lines about the voice of the people...

The voice of any people is the sword
That guards them or the sword that beats them down.

[1] Cf. the fine effect of the monotonous ending of words in -ων at the beginning of the thirteenth book of the *Iliad*.

A letter of Jan. 13th, 1877, from the Hon. Sec. of the Burns' Memorial, asks my father to be present at the unveiling of the statue in Glasgow. The Secretary says: "So enthusiastic are the people of the West of Scotland that the 25th (the date of unveiling) is to be held as a general holiday, and a procession of thirty or forty thousand is to take part in the proceedings." My father answered that he could not go—"Though I have as much veneration for the poet as if I had been born a Scotchman."

Great pleasure was given to my father by the following letter from Lord Lytton; a graceful and cordial recognition of the intention shown in the dedication of "Harold" to obliterate the memory of the old literary passage-of-arms with his father[1].

CALCUTTA,
19*th Jan.*, 1877.

DEAR MR TENNYSON,

I am told by the English newspapers, received to-day, that you have dedicated to me your new dramatic poem "Harold." I have not yet seen the poem; but there must be an exception to every rule, and assuming that in this instance at least the newspapers tell the truth, I cannot let a mail go by without asking you to believe how flattered I am by the honour you have done me, and how sensibly touched by your manner of doing it. Memories the tenderest and most cherished of my life are strangely mingled with the hope your generosity has sanctioned, that I may live hereafter on your pages, associated with the name of their great author, to whom in common with all our countrymen, I already owe so much, and with that of my dear father, to whom I owe life itself, and all great things in life,

[1] See Vol. I. p. 244. The dedication ran:

MY DEAR LORD LYTTON,

After old-world records—such as the Bayeux tapestry and the Roman de Rou,—Edward Freeman's *History of the Norman Conquest*, and your father's Historical Romance treating of the same times, have been mainly helpful to me in writing this Drama. Your father dedicated his *Harold* to my father's brother; allow me to dedicate my "Harold" to yourself.

A. TENNYSON.

nor least of all my share in the valued tribute so generously offered to his memory by England's greatest living Poet. In his name and for his sake, I thank you no less warmly than on my own behalf. It is a fact of which I was not aware until after his death, that the plot of almost every one of my father's novels was first worked out in the form of a play; and probably he owed to the habitual employment of this method much of his success as a romance writer in the dramatic development of character and situation. In the mass of his unpublished manuscripts I have found an unfinished dramatic sketch entitled "William the Norman" or "William the Conqueror" (I forget which), containing the undoubted germ of the historical romance to which reference is made in the dedication of your own poem. This manuscript is not with me in India; but, should I live to return to England, I hope you will then accept from me a private copy of it, as a literary curiosity which will henceforth derive its chief interest from your own work. Meanwhile pray accept the sincere assurance of those grateful sentiments with which I am,

Dear Mr Tennyson, your obliged

LYTTON.

In March 1877 my father wrote "Montenegro," which he always put first among his sonnets, writing thus to Mr Gladstone: "Your talk interested me and my son so much that we quite forgot one of my two objects in calling on you, the first to gain your approval of that sonnet of which you were the inspirer; the second to ask if you could give us tickets of admission to the House for the great debate to-morrow, if it come on to-morrow, and about what time you may be expected to speak."

On March 28th my father and I dined with Lord Houghton at Almond's Hotel to meet Schliemann. In the course of conversation Schliemann said: "Hissarlik, the ancient Troy, is no bigger than the courtyard of Burlington House." "I can never believe that," my father replied. As we were leaving the room after dinner, Schliemann, duly impressed with the splendour

of the entertainment, remarked to us of our host: "Our lord is a very glorious lord, is he not?"

In June Victor Hugo thanked my father in the following letter for the sonnet, addressed to the great French poet, after my brother had visited him in Paris:

4 *Juin*, 1877, PARIS.

MON ÉMINENT ET CHER CONFRÈRE,

Je lis avec émotion vos vers superbes, c'est un reflet de gloire que vous m'envoyez. Comment n'aimerais-je pas l'Angleterre qui produit des hommes tels que vous! l'Angleterre de Wilberforce! l'Angleterre de Milton et de Newton! l'Angleterre de Shakespeare! France et Angleterre sont pour moi un seul peuple comme Vérité et Liberté sont une seule lumière. Je crois à l'unité divine.

J'aime tous les peuples et tous les hommes et j'admire vos nobles vers.

Recevez mon cordial serrement de main.

VICTOR HUGO.

J'ai été heureux de connaître votre charmant fils—il m'a semblé, que serrer sa main, c'était presser la votre.

In July I find a note from Sir Alexander Grant to Mr Palgrave describing a visit to Farringford:

After I saw you in London I had a delightful visit to Freshwater, at least I found it so in spite of the most inclement weather. As the *Saturday Review* wisely remarks, "Nature brings not back the mastodon," in the case of visiting houses where of old we had divine hours. But yet at Farringford mine heart burned within me. The bard would not smoke as much as I could have wished, *he is very regular and methodical*, and walks and sleeps by rule, which is uninteresting, but which, I hope, will cause him to live till ninety. I never knew him more hearty and kind.

In the evenings my father would now play at Dummy Whist, and on one occasion he so terrified

a young lady by talking to Dummy as to a real person that she forthwith vanished to her own room. About this time a beautiful setter was given him. It suddenly struck him at midnight that the new dog might feel hungry and lonely, so he went downstairs and stole a chicken for the dog, "Dear old Don." Great was the discomfiture in the kitchen next morning as to what had become of the chicken.

In October he wrote to Mrs Brookfield on her son's marriage:

*Oct. 11th*, 1877.

MY DEAR J. O. B.,

... Out of the distance I spread my hands over your son, and his future, if that—tho' I trust it may in some measure please you—can in any way avail him.

Your old friend who remembers you coming out on the balcony of the house at Southampton—I was walking with *him*[1] and he had just told me of his engagement.

A. TENNYSON.

At Christmas Longfellow sent him a friendly greeting:

CAMBRIDGE, *Nov. 27th*, 1877.

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

Accept this brief Christmas greeting from me, with all good wishes for yourself and household.

Yours faithfully,

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

[1] In 1869 my father had written an elegiac sonnet to his old college-friend Brookfield for Lord Lyttelton's memoir.

*Wapentake to Alfred Tennyson.*

Poet! I come to touch thy lance with mine,
Not as a knight who on the listed field
Of tourney touched his adversary's shield
In token of defiance, but in sign
Of homage to the mastery, which is thine
In English song; nor will I keep concealed,
And voiceless as a rivulet frost-congealed,
My admiration for thy verse divine.
Not of the howling dervishes of song,
Who craze the brain with their delirious dance,
Art thou, O sweet historian of the heart!
Therefore to thee the laurel-leaves belong,
To thee our love and our allegiance,
For thy allegiance to the poet's art.

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

My father answered:

MY DEAR LONGFELLOW,

You have sent me a Christmas greeting: more than that, a Christmas gift in the shape of a very perfect flower from your own spacious garden: wherefore I exult and stick it in my cap and defy my foes. I and wife and sons salute you and thank you and wish all happiness to you and yours here and hereafter.

With our kindest remembrances,

Yours ever, A. TENNYSON.

*À propos* of Longfellow's greeting Edward Fitzgerald wrote:

LITTLE GRANGE, WOODBRIDGE, *Dec.* 1877.

Will anyone tell me anything of old Frederick? Three months ago, I think, he wrote me word of a house he had bought near Jersey, a wonderful bargain, which I told him would be about the first wonderful bargain he ever made in his life, so

far as I could guess. Now a month or so ago I wrote to ask him about himself and his bargain: and, though he is not so liberal a letter-writer as the present, he generally satisfies me with some answer within such a time. Does anyone at Farringford know about him? And will tell me? Be it noticed that being on distant terms with the whole Laureate Family, I address no one in particular: only am obliged to direct to that paltry poet who is the unworthy head. And, in spite of my wrongs, I do wish them all a happy Christmas and New Year, and am theirs according as they shall behave to

They know Whom.

That was a nice sonnet of Longfellow's to "The Laurell d Head"; the "howling dervishes" will tire out in their dance before long, I do think: never doubted but they would.

O but then my Bil-ly listed,
  Listed and cross'd the roaring main:
For King George he fought brave-ly
  In Po'tig'l, France, and Spain:
Don't you see my Billy a-coming,
  Coming in yonder cloud:
Gridiron Angels ho-vering round him,
  Don't you see him in yonder clouds?

E. F. G.

On the 28th of February, 1878, Lionel and Eleanor Locker were married in Westminster Abbey. Dean Stanley was too ill to officiate; but he sent for the young bride and bridegroom to his bedroom and gave them his blessing.

Frederick Locker writes to me in June 1878:

I have a letter from Arthur (Dean Stanley) asking me if Herkomer may take a portrait of A. T. Herkomer himself says he will go to you wherever you may happen to be, and it will only occupy about three hours. I write in great haste, and I know I bore you by writing, but I do not like to refuse my brother, who, I fancy, likes Herkomer.

Herkomer's offer was accepted, and he came to Farringford and had sittings from my father.

From 1875 to 1882 we every year took a house in London, in Wimpole Street, in Upper Belgrave Street, Eaton Place and Eaton Square, in order to be near my brother whose work was at the India Office; and as my father said, "To rub our country rust off." We always kept Christmas at Farringford, moving to London in February to stay till Easter. During these years my father made many new acquaintances. Among these I may name the Selbornes, with whom my parents became close friends; and who, fortunately for us, lived within driving distance of Aldworth.

On one occasion Ruskin lunched with us, adorned by his accustomed blue tie, kind and courteous as ever. He said that his inclination was to devote himself still to Art, but that he felt it a duty to give the remainder of his life to the education of the poorer classes. In his opinion "Everything bad is to be found in London and other large cities; and only in life and work in country fields is there health for body and for mind." My father and he deprecated in the strongest possible language the proposed Channel Tunnel.

Before Ruskin took his leave, my father said to him:

"Do you know that most romantic of lyrics?

He turn'd his charger as he spake,
Upon the river shore,
He gave his bridle-reins a shake,
Said Adieu for evermore,
My Love!
And adieu for evermore."

"Do I not?" said Ruskin, "I am so glad you like it, Tennyson; I place it among the best things ever done by anyone."

Upon a day, memorable to me, my father took me to Pembroke Lodge. He had a high esteem

for Lord and Lady Russell; "Plucky Lord John" he would call him. Lord Russell and my father had a strong bond in their common conviction that the English race was "destined to be the greatest among races." Both gloried in the "Imperii porrecta Majestas" of England and advocated an ever-closer union with our colonies[1]. My father believed that the federation so formed would be the strongest force for good and for freedom that the world has ever known. I have heard him say that he did not believe it hopeless that America should enter into a close alliance with such a league.

"The craven fear of being great" my father felt was among the besetting sins of certain English statesmen, and in reply to this Lord Russell would cry that there must be no niggardliness with regard to armaments, he being convinced that "If need were, we should be able to stand alone." My father particularly liked Lord Russell's high expectations from "the independence of nationalities." They both shook hands over the hope that now-a-days foreign ministers, whether Liberal or Conservative, had learnt to be alive to the need of continuity in our foreign policy.

On another not-to-be-forgotten day General Gordon came to us. He had lately arrived from Ireland, after having made there certain suggestions with regard to the land question. These were, I believe, the foundation of the "Ashbourne Act."

In answer to our invitation to luncheon he arrived suddenly, and asked to see me in the hall. Having

[1] A letter which I wrote to the Colonial Institute after his death summarises my father's views on this subject:

"One of the deepest desires of his life was to help the realisation of the ideal of an Empire by the most intimate union of every part of our British Empire. He believed that every different member so united would, with a heightening of individuality to each member, give such strength and greatness and stability to the whole as would make our Empire a faithful and fearless leader in all that is good throughout all the world."

learnt that we were alone, he glided spirit-like into the dining-room where we were already seated. Going straight up to my father, he said in a solemn voice: "Mr Tennyson, I want you to do something for our young soldiers. You alone are the man who can do it. We want training-homes for them all over England." As it happened, we were at that time much interested in a project of James Baillie Hamilton's—a camp where gentlemen's sons might be prepared for the army or the colonies. We told the General of this and he allowed us to introduce Mr Baillie Hamilton to him. It was finally agreed that if such a camp were founded the General would take the head, on condition that arrangements were made to admit also the sons of the poorest. The camp was never formed, the General was ordered to Mauritius, and the scheme of a training-home for the army fell through; until the Gordon Home was initiated by my father, and founded by the Prince of Wales, after Gordon's death and in his memory.

What struck my father about Gordon was, he said, "his look of utter benevolence and bonhomie." He was to have returned and given my father more detail as to his young soldiers' camp, but he wrote:

I fear I must deprive myself of a great pleasure, viz. a smoke with Mr Tennyson, for I am engaged, and on Sunday evening I generally stay at home. I hope when these east winds have ceased, and when you are back in town, I may come and see you unless I am already gone.

Believe me with kind regards yours sincerely,

C. E. GORDON[1].

[1] The following is an extract from a letter from Lady Cardwell:

74 EATON SQUARE, *April 9th*, 1878.

.....It may interest you to know another instance of the solace you have given to those in distant lands severed from all those with whom they could hold converse.

You know all about Col. Gordon (Chinese Gordon) and the immense

For Matthew Arnold my father always had a warm regard, not only because he admired his best work, but also because he had known him at Coniston as a young man just entering on life. They met frequently in London. On one occasion, when he called, I remember my father was amused at what he called "Mat's sublime waggery," for "Mat" had said to me, probably to call forth a retort, "Your father has been our most popular poet for over forty years, and I am of opinion that he fully deserves his reputation."

Later I met Matthew Arnold at Mr Goschen's, and my father gave me this message for him: "Tell Mat not to write any more of those prose things, like *Literature and Dogma* but to give us something like his 'Thyrsis,' 'Scholar Gipsy,' or 'Forsaken Merman.'" "Mat" took the message in the best possible spirit, and told it gleefully about himself all over London.

Two or three times we met George Eliot in town, and she expressed herself much pleased that the poet who, she said, had "so much human blood in his poems and plays," should have told her that her "flight of Hetty in *Adam Bede* and Thackeray's gradual breaking down of Colonel Newcome were the two most pathetic things in modern prose fiction." He had the highest admiration for her insight into character, but did not think

pressure upon him and the heroic services he is rendering to the cause of humanity in putting down the slave trade, as Governor of the Soudan, by a wonderful sacrifice of himself. I often hear from him of his long solitary rides of hundreds of miles in the desert and wilderness, and wished to find the most acceptable companion I could send to him.

It must be in a very small compass. Happily I found the beautiful edition of all your books in the small green case, and I sent it a few months ago.

He is intensely delighted with it and mentions it in every letter. In his last, lately received from Khartoum, he says: "I find the reading of Tennyson is my great relief, and the volumes are so small and of such clear print that they will always go with me. I have long wanted a small copy, but never knew that he had published one," etc.

her quite so true to nature as Shakespeare and Miss Austen[1].

I read somewhere an account of a quarrel between her and my father, carried on in loud tones, with red faces and clenched fists, the subject being her want of belief in an after-life. I showed this to him, and he wrote down what actually happened. "I and she never had one moment of discussion, much less of quarrel. She called, and when she went away I pressed her hand kindly and sweetly, and said, 'I wish you well with your molecules.' She replied as gently, 'I get on very well with my molecules.'"

I have also the record of a later conversation between them which took place at Aldworth. They agreed as to "the namby-pambyism of the age, which hates a story to end in tragedy, as if the greatest moral lessons were not taught by tragedies." My father added, "What the public do not understand is that the great tragedy is all balance throughout." She then objected to the many English writers who set up French literature against our own, for "Is not ours," she said, "one of the greatest in the world?"

She wanted my father to make a poem of this story, which she narrated as true, and as having occurred in one of the midland counties. A drunkard boasted that he would "fight any bull ever born." He went out into the starlight and walked up to a well-known ferocious bull, dealing him a blow on the forehead which felled both man and bull. By that shock the man became "undrunk" and never drank again, so great was the terror which seized on him while lying there: the bull "nozzling" him; those big eyes, head and horns between him and the sky. George Eliot thought that my father would make a fine analysis of what passed in the man's mind as he lay there under the starry heavens.

[1] For instance, the character of Adam Bede was "too much idealized."

In return for this my father told her a story of real life, about a sailor, devoted to music, who was always in requisition for sailors' dances, as he played superbly on the violin. But whenever he played his nerves were so excited that he took brandy to quiet them, and became in consequence invariably drunk after his music. One night when sailing up the Mississippi he brought out his violin under the broad moon, and then broke it over the side of the vessel; having resolved never to play violin more or get drunk again.

When the restoration of St Mark's was contemplated George Eliot wrote to my father (she had asked him to protest against it):

Please, dear friend, send the letter about St Mark's, Venice, without delay,—a dying struggle against the vandalism of the present age.

M. LEWES.

In November 1878 the lively, witty, kindly George Lewes died, and my father wrote as follows to George Eliot, who was all but broken-hearted:

DEAR FRIEND,

Our affectionate sympathies are with you. That is all that can be said at present, and these "words" are nothing to you at present, but for his sake accept them.

A. TENNYSON.

My father's first meeting with the Princess of Wales took place at Mrs Greville's in Chester Square. The Princess asked him to read the "Welcome to Alexandra." When he had read it, the fact of his reading his own complimentary poem to the Princess herself somehow struck them both as being so ludicrous, that he dropt the book on the floor and both went into fits of uncontrollable laughter.

It was at this time that Lady Simeon had a wish to bring Newman and my father together. She therefore forwarded a message from my father to the effect that he would like to meet Newman whenever they happened to be in London together. Newman wrote as follows:

*April 17th*, 1877.

DEAR MR TENNYSON,

I hope you will not think it a liberty in me thus to address you, but the kindness of your message to me by Lady Simeon encourages me to do so. While I acquiesce in the purport of it, I cannot help expressing the pleasure and the honour I should feel it to be allowed to make your acquaintance. Great differences of opinion and personal history lie between us, but it would be strange if I *alone* of Englishmen did not feel the *force* of those endowments of mind which have made your name so popular. I am with great respect,

Sincerely yours, J. H. NEWMAN.

Dr Dabbs has recorded the following conversation that he had with my father about "In Memoriam" and Newman:

*D.* Do you think there is any really insuperable obstacle or series of obstacles between science and religion?

*T.* I have tried to say my say about it in "In Memoriam."

*D.* Certainly no lack of religion there.

*T.* I hope not.

*D.* And all proper reverence for scientific facts?

*T.* So there should be—(long pause). I sometimes think it is the least misunderstood of all my work. I don't mean that the commentators have been more right, but that the general reading public has been less wrong than usual as to my intentions.

*D.* I often wish, sir, that commentaries might cease or the poet himself supply them.

*T.* That can never be. And (after another long pause) the poet might not do them well.

*D.* He could not, in many cases, do them worse.

*T.* I am not sure (half smiling). He might!

*D.* I see Newman was asked as to his meaning of two lines in "Lead, kindly Light" and frankly acknowledged he had forgotten "what he was driving at."

*T.* He never used such a phrase as "what he was driving at."

*D.* No, no, that is mine.

*T.* Is that paraphrase or commentary, eh?

*D.* Ah! (Then there was a good laugh at my expense.)

*T.* I daresay Newman may have forgotten. It would be hard indeed to remember the "atmosphere" of each thought. When young men ask me the interpretation of some of my *early* lines, I sometimes forget, and can only answer with Goethe, "You probably know better than I do, being young."

Among the compliments paid my father, that which he valued most was his old friend Browning's dedication of a selection of his own poems:

*To Alfred Tennyson.*

In poetry illustrious and consummate,
In friendship noble and sincere.

Browning frequently dined with us. The *tête-à-tête* conversations between him and my father on every imaginable topic, when no one but myself was with them, were the best talk I have ever heard, so full of repartee, quip, epigram, anecdote, depth and wisdom: but it is quite impossible to attempt to reproduce them, owing to their very brilliancy. These brother-poets were two of the most widely-read

men of their time, absolutely without a touch of jealousy, and revelling as it were in each other's power.

On rare occasions my father would rally Browning playfully on his harshness of rhythm, the obscurity and length of his poems. The retort would be: "I cannot alter myself: the people must take me as they find me." My father would repeat his usual dictum about literary work: "An artist should get his workmanship as good as he can, and make his work as perfect as possible. A small vessel, built on fine lines, is likely to float further down the stream of time than a big raft." They would laugh heartily together at Browning's faculty for absurd and abstruse rhymes. I remember a dinner at Mr Leslie Stephen's, where Jebb, Miss Thackeray, and Browning were present. Browning said he thought that he could make a rhyme for every word in the English language. We gave him "rhinoceros." He wrote down the following lines, saying that he had made them previously:

"O, if you should see a rhinoceros
And a tree be in sight,
Climb quick, for his might
Is a match for the Gods, he can toss Eros."

At another time Browning produced for my father's amusement impromptu verses on Carlyle and his wife, "Terse Verse, being a contribution to Scottish Anthology," as he called it:

"Hail ye hills and heaths of Ecclefechan!
Hail ye banks and braes of Craigenputtock!
T. Carlyle was born in Ecclefechan,
Jane his wife was born in Craigenputtock.
She, a pearl where eye detect no speck can,
He, ordained to close with and cross-buttock
Cant, the giant—these, O Ecclefechan,
These your glories be, O Craigenputtock!"

My father on the other hand confessed that he believed he knew the quantity of every word in the English language except perhaps "scissors." We asked him to make a Sapphic stanza in quantity, with the Greek cadence. He gave us this:

*Sapphics*[1].

Faded ev'ry violet, all the roses;
Gone the glorious promise; and the victim,
Broken in this anger of Aphrodite,
Yields to the victor.

Browning had sent us his *Aristophanes' Apology*: "another jet from his full fountain," as my father said; and then he gave his *Inn Album* to my father, who wrote:

MY DEAR BROWNING,

You are the most brotherly of poets, and your brother in the muses thanks you with the affection of a brother. *She* would thank you too on paper if she could put hand to pen.

A. T.

While in London we often walked to the Westminster Deanery, for about Lady Augusta and the Dean there was "a good atmosphere of high work." Dean Stanley's courage and truth, and his delicate perceptions of things beautiful and spiritual, and his broad and generous sympathies and interests, fascinated my father. He often quoted a remark of the Dean's: "So far from being effete, Christianity is as yet undeveloped." A story that Stanley told (not mentioned in his *Life*) was, that after a great function in the Abbey he was coming

[1] Printed in Professor Jebb's *Primer of Greek Literature*, 1877.

out with Disraeli. The Dean was saying that the Athanasian Creed ought to be omitted from the Prayer Book. Disraeli looked up at him and replied, "Mr Dean, no dogmas, no deans."

When Cleopatra's Needle was brought to London, Stanley asked my father to make some lines upon it; to be engraven on the base. These were put together by my father at once, and I made a note of them:

*Cleopatra's Needle.*

Here, I that stood in On beside the flow
Of sacred Nile, three thousand years ago!—
A Pharaoh, kingliest of his kingly race,
First shaped, and carved, and set me in my place.
A Caesar of a punier dynasty
Thence haled me toward the Mediterranean sea,
Whence your own citizens, for their own renown,
Thro' strange seas drew me to your monster town.
I have seen the four great empires disappear!
I was when London was not! I am here!

Renan called. My father thought him genial, acute and epigrammatic, and approved much of one of his epigrams, "La vérité est dans une nuance." Stories were told of Brittany and the Bretons; and Renan was delighted when my father narrated how the landlady of the inn at Lannion had recognized "Monsieur Tennyson" as the poet of their King Arthur.

My father said that he had been disappointed with Carnac, and that Stonehenge was far finer. Renan discoursed on Carnac, and said that stones similar to the Carnac stones had been discovered in Algiers; he believed that they were all symbols of tribal covenants. My father and he then discussed Villemarqué, and my father said "Villemarqué est plus poète que savant"; to which Renan assented. The talk turned to the ma-

terialism and realism of the present day, against which my father inveighed. Renan said, "Ah yes, it is better to illuminate history with genius as you and others have done, than with mere research." The retort was quick: "You are a prose-poet, Monsieur Renan, and perhaps in this instance too imaginative."

My father was fond of asking Joachim to play to him in his own house. One particular evening I remember, at 86, Eaton Square. My father had been expressing his wonder at Joachim's mastery of the violin,—for Joachim had been playing to us and our friends numberless Hungarian dances,—and by way of thanks for the splendid music I asked him to read one of his poems to Joachim. Accordingly after the guests had gone he took the great musician to smoke with him in his 'den' at the top of the house. There they talked of Goethe, especially praising a poem of Goethe's old age, "Der West-östliche Divan," and then my father read "The Revenge." On reaching the line

> And the night went down, and the sun smiled out far
> over the summer sea,

he asked Joachim, "Could you do that on your violin?"—the peace of nature after the thunder of the battle. There was no more reading however that night, for he suddenly turned round to me, saying, "I must not read any more, else I shall wake up the cook who is sleeping next door."

Whenever a chance offered itself, we called on the Carlyles. My father would say, "Mr and Mrs Carlyle on the whole enjoyed life together, else they would not have chaffed one another so heartily."

Carlyle made a point of not unfrequently paying his respects to my mother, who he knew could not go to see him; and the last time he called my nephew, "golden-haired Ally," was brought in to the great man. Carlyle

put his hands on the little fellow's head and said solemnly, "Fair fall thee, little man, in this world, and the next." Upon which my father said to me: "Carlyle is the most reverent and most irreverent man I know."

I subjoin some talks which my father had with Carlyle, jotted down in my note-book.

*A. T.* People say you are writing your autobiography.

*Carlyle.* Do they? Do they want me to make away with myself that they talk like that?

*A. T.* Why don't you try your hand at a great novel? you have seen life enough.

*Carlyle.* No, no. I write a novel! I know nothing of human character.

After going with my father to the British Museum and looking at the Greek and Roman statues, Carlyle said, "Neither man nor god can get on without a decent jaw-bone, and not one of them has a decent jaw-bone."

Carlyle became in later years reconciled to my father's writing poetry. He admired "Harold," saying that it was "full of wild pathos," and founded on the Bayeux tapestry, which he called "a very blessed work indeed."

My father read him "The Revenge."

*Carlyle.* Eh! Alfred, you have got the grip of it.

*A. T.* There's a man for you. The Spaniards declared he would "carouse" three or four glasses of wine and take the glasses between his teeth and crush them to pieces and swallow them down.

*Carlyle.* (Half to himself.) I knew that Alfred would treat that episode in a masterful manner, and he'd not allude to Elizabeth's starving the poor sailors.

And then he spoke of "The May Queen." "Oh! but that's tender and true; my niece says it sometimes to me!"

Through "The First Quarrel" he gave little cries of sympathy.

*Carlyle.* Ah, but that's a dreary tragic tale.

*A. T.* That's a true tale. My doctor in the Isle of Wight told it me.

*Carlyle, going on about the poem:* Ech! poor fellow, he was just an honest plain man, and she was a curious production of the century, and I'm very sorry for that poor girl too.

One day Carlyle was full of Holman Hunt's "Shadow of the Cross."

*Carlyle.* I think, poor fellow, he painted that picture in a distraction.

*A. T.* The Christ I call Christ-like is Sebastian del Piombo's in the National Gallery[1].

Then they talked of Goldsmith and Goethe.

*Carlyle.* Goldie was just an Irish blackguard, with a fine brain and sun-like eyes, and a great fund of goosery.

*A. T.* And of tender-heartedness: I love Goldie.

He made Carlyle laugh by giving a humorous imitation of Dr Johnson and Goldsmith talking together.

*Carlyle.* Goldsmith was much read in Germany in Goethe's time.

*A. T.* You know we visited Goethe's house at Weimar. The "Salve" on the door-mat, and the legion of Goethe's old boots there looked to me terribly pathetic.

Then my father told how we had found a book "From T. Carlyle" on his table, which pleased the old man mightily.

They made merry over the statues of Goethe and Schiller in the market-place, "for all the world like drunken sailors quarrelling over a wreath."

*Carlyle.* Ay, ay. Art is at a low ebb; and among the nations England, unless she takes great heed, will go down to the devil.

[1] My father also had a high admiration of Leonardo da Vinci's sketch of the head of Christ in the Brera at Milan.

*A. T.* Come! we are not so bad as in Charles II.'s reign.

*Carlyle.* O yes, there were more Andrew Marvells then. True, the Parliament was so coxcombed at having cut a king's head off that there was no doing anything with them. Those days indeed were very like the days now, no real strong ruler, all just a confusion of jackassery.

He called Gladstone "The man with the immeasurable power of vocables."

*A. T.* I love the man, but no Prime Minister ought to be an orator.

They touched on Macaulay.

*A. T.* Macaulay, Guizot, Hallam and I went over the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Hall together; Macaulay said to me on going away, "I am delighted to have met you, Mr Tennyson"; but I never saw him afterwards.

*Carlyle.* Eh (looking at him grimly), Alfred, Macaulay was afraid of you, you are such a black man (with a tremendous guffaw).

The last time we saw Carlyle he was in his dressing-gown, reading Masson's *Milton*.

*A. T.* Milton is a grand old fellow.

*Carlyle.* Yes, yes, and this man Masson is the first man who has properly sorted the Mosaic cosmogony, and I can now tell which way Satan went; but Masson has hung on his Milton peg *all* the politics, which Milton, poor fellow, had never much to do with except to print a pamphlet or two.

They then talked about death.

*A. T.* In my old age I should like to get away from all this tumult and turmoil of civilization and live on the top of a tropical mountain! I should at least like to see the splendours of the Brazilian forests before I die.

*Carlyle.* I would also like to quit it all.

*A. T.* If I were a young man, I would head a colony out somewhere or other.

*Carlyle.* O, ay, so would I, to India or somewhere: but the scraggiest bit of heath in Scotland is more to me than all the forests of Brazil. I am just twinkling away, and I wish I had had my Dimittis long ago.

Carlyle gave my father his tobacco box as a pledge of eternal brotherhood, and at the bottom of this I found a letter from Carlyle introducing Mrs Oliphant.

Mrs Oliphant, whom this note accompanies, is an old and esteemed friend in this house; distinguished in literature, *Life of Edward Irving*, etc., and what is best of all, a highly amiable, rational and worthy lady.

Yours ever truly, T. CARLYLE.

# CHAPTER XI.

## DEATH OF CHARLES (TENNYSON) TURNER. "THE FALCON." VENICE.

### 1879–80.

In the Spring of 1879 a great sorrow came upon my parents. My father's favourite brother Charles (Tennyson) Turner died at Cheltenham on April 25th, and on May 20th his wife, my mother's sister, followed him. His sonnets, "Letty's Globe, "Time and Twilight," "On seeing a child blush on his first view of a corpse," "The Buoy Bell," "The Schoolboy's Dream," "On shooting a swallow in early youth," had in my father's judgment all the tenderness of the Greek epigram, and he ranked sonnets such as "Time and Twilight," and "The Holy Emerald," among the noblest in the language.

My uncle with his aquiline nose, dark eyes and black hair was very like my father, and Thackeray seeing him in middle life called him a "Velasquez tout craché." As Vicar of Grasby he was known as the bountiful and loving father of his flock, his wife being in all things his devoted helpmate. We often spent part of the summer with them in their Vicarage. At their own expense they had built this and the church and the schools. Both had great delight in a simple country life, and my uncle had especial pleasure in

his garden, his dogs, and his horses. These last he would train to obey his voice rather than whip or rein. No one who reads his poems can fail to see the "alma beata et bella" breathing through them. My father's "At Midnight," June 30th, 1879, was written as a preface to the *Collected Sonnets*, published in 1880.

Mr Gladstone wrote a pleasant letter about the volume, and my father answered, with an allusion to the elegy by Catullus on his brother:

MY DEAR GLADSTONE,

I am, as you will believe, very glad to have your appreciative estimate of my brother's sonnets. I wish indeed that you had known him: he was almost the most loveable human being I have ever met. I am glad too that you are touched by my little prefatory poem, so far as to honour it by a comparison with those lovely lines "Multas per terras et multa per æquora vectus," of which, as you truly say, neither I nor any other "can surpass the beauty": nor can any modern elegy, so long as men retain the least hope in the after-life of those whom they loved, equal in pathos the desolation of that everlasting farewell, "Atque in perpetuum frater ave atque vale." It would be pleasant to talk to you on these things instead of writing, but I fear that I cannot accept your kind invitation to Hawarden this year.

Ever, my dear Gladstone, yours,

A. TENNYSON.

In May my father published in a revised form a poem written when he was seventeen, "The Lover's Tale." The publication was forced upon him, as it was being extensively pirated. He had already in 1875 suppressed an edition brought out by Mr Herne Shepherd, paying the costs of the decree of the Court of Chancery, since

he heard that Mr Shepherd was very poor and that his aged mother depended on him for her livelihood.

In June Fitzgerald wrote:

LITTLE GRANGE, WOODBRIDGE,
*June*, 1879.

MY DEAR ALFRED,

I do not write to you now, because when I have done so lately, Mrs Tennyson has taken the trouble to answer me, which I did not wish her to have the trouble of doing.

Spedding tells me he has been on a visit to Farringford to arrange with you about an edition of your brother Charles' sonnets. Six months ago did I beg Spedding to make them more known to the world by some review, which he was the one man to do; and now he is going to do something of the kind, for a better, if sadder, reason than any request of mine. I believe that these sonnets, along with your own poems, are the *only* poetry of our times destined to survive: I could wish some of the sonnets omitted; but *that* I suppose even *you* must not do.

Then I have to thank you for your last, of some lines of which I have an echo in my head from some 50 years ago. Was not the original name *Cadrilla*[1], which I thought too remindful of Paine's first set (of quadrilles), which you used to talk about and in which I believe you greatly excelled?

Now, in my turn, I shall send you my Readings (not Recitations) in old Crabbe's *Tales of the Hall:* which you will just look into. Had I published, I should have used your authority, though not your name, for advising the world to read a little of the old chap, now buried, but "post tres dies" to rise again, if the critics and creators of two generations agone were not mistaken. So I should have quoted one of our time (A. T.) saying to me "Crabbe has a world of his own," which I suppose means originally the poems will live, as your brother's will, when others lie past howling. Well: had I thought proper to *name* you, I might have published: for then I should have succeeded in getting two or three hundred people perhaps to try a taste of my old boy before his regular turn comes; but no one would be tempted by my solitary recommendation; a

[1] Instead of "Camilla" in "The Lover's Tale."

critic or two might quash me and mine—so "enfin" I keep the book for my friends; some of whom may think that, as my old Montaigne says, "Tout abrégé d'un bon livre est sot abrégé." When you get the book you had better say nothing to me about it; which I do think is the best to be agreed on beforehand by friends in such cases, give or take.

Think of old Carlyle (who has been but weakly this winter) reading right through Shakespeare during the Spring months! So his niece writes me. I do not hear of his doing the same by his Goethe. I lately made another shot at *Faust* in B. Taylor's translation, but I am as deaf to the charmer as ever. I really do suppose it is my obtuseness, as so many great people believe in him.

Are you ever coming this way again? It was very good of you to think of me in your travel three years ago. Three years! A consideration; when one has left 70 behind one. I only wonder to find myself alive after this most mortal winter.

Farewell: do *not* let Mrs Tennyson write in reply. I take for granted from Spedding's letter that all is well with you all, and do you believe that I am always your ancient

E. F. G.

Mrs Greville also wrote about Carlyle:

MILFORD, *June*, 1879.

Let me hear your plans. I will not ask Carlyle till I can make sure of finding you all at Aldworth. I cannot tell you how enormously curious and interesting it is to listen to Carlyle. His hands shake with a sort of palsy so that his meat must be cut for him: he feels this with painful acuteness. This is the only sign of age. He can walk any distance. He surprised me by putting Browning next Alfred Tennyson. He has the tenderest contempt for the fellow-creatures he despises, and mixes up in his conversation the dead, the living, and characters in fiction with the greatest method. He said, "Alfred always from the beginning took a grip at the right side of every question." He cares for goodness more than genius, and the *truth* of "The Grandmother" *quite* upset him—he kept saying, "Poor old body, poor old body. And Alfred wrote that: well, I didn't know it."

SABINE GREVILLE.

Mr Fields the American publisher paid us a visit this spring at Farringford. In a lecture, delivered afterwards, Fields said that in passing through the park by moonlight with my father, the poet suddenly fell on his knees and said, "Violets, man, violets! smell them and you'll sleep the better."

His keen sense of smell may well have discovered the flowers in the night, but he writes to a poet who had indited a sonnet on the incident: "What Mr Fields has said about the violets is *doubtless* authentic, still (the fact) has altogether faded out of *my* memory, but I shall not easily forget your graceful sonnet for which I pray you to accept my best thanks."

On Sept. 29th he wrote to a sculptor who wished to make a bust of him: "I thank you for the photograph of Longfellow's bust, but having had my own executed by Woolner some years ago[1], I then made up my mind not to sit again to any sculptor however excellent in his art."

In December Mr and Mrs Kendal produced "The Falcon" at the St James' Theatre, and it had a run of sixty-seven nights. Fanny Kemble saw the piece, and her criticism was that it was an exquisite little poem in action, like one of Alfred de Musset's, such as *Les Caprices de Marianne.* "Mrs Kendal," my father said, "looked magnificent, and Kendal spoke his lines well."

In February 1880 my father sent two child-songs, "The City Child" and "Minnie and Winnie" (set to music by my mother), to *St Nicholas' Magazine.*

It was in the following month that the students of Glasgow University endeavoured to obtain my father's consent to his nomination for the Lord Rectorship of Glasgow. He had understood that the invitation had come from the whole body of students irrespective of

[1] He alluded to the bust by Woolner made in 1857, which he much preferred to Woolner's later bust.

political party, and accepted, on condition that this was the case. The manifesto of the Glasgow University Independent Club recognized his condition.

He found however that he had been put forward as a nominee of the Conservative party and at once withdrew.

*To Matthew Fraser.*

*May 6th*, 1880.

DEAR SIR,

I only consented to stand for your Lord Rectorship when informed by the letter of introduction which your agreeable deputation brought, that my nomination was "supported by a large majority, if not the totality, of the students of Glasgow." It now seems necessary that I should, by standing at your invitation, appear what I have steadfastly refused to be—a party candidate for the Conservative Club. The mere fact of a contest between the supporters of a nominee for a Liberal and of that for a Conservative Club leads, I suppose, inevitably to this conclusion in the minds of the public, and therefore I must beg to decline the honour of your candidature.

You are probably aware that some years ago the Glasgow Liberals asked me to be their candidate, and that I in like manner declined. Yet I would gladly accept a nomination, after what has occurred, if at any time a body of students, bearing no political name, should wish to nominate me, or if both Liberals and Conservatives should ever happen to agree in foregoing the excitement of a political contest, and in desiring a Lord Rector who would not appear for installation, and who would in fact be a mere *roi fainéant* with nothing but the literary merits you are good enough to appreciate.

I thank you for all the trouble you have taken,

and I am, with best wishes for the prosperity of your University,

Yours faithfully, A. TENNYSON.

I now received the following letter from Froude:

5 ONSLOW GARDENS, S.W.
*June 7th*, 1880.

MY DEAR MR TENNYSON,

I am sorry that I shall lose the pleasure of paying you a visit but I am far more sorry for the reason. Your father has two existences. Spiritually he lives in all our minds (in mine he has lived for nearly forty years) in forms imperishable as diamonds which time and change have no power over. The mortal case of him is of frailer material, and, as I believe he takes extremely little care of it himself, the charge falls on you, and the world will expect an account of it at your hands. Centuries will pass before we have another real full-grown poet. The seeds of time I suppose are sown and grow for a bit, and the reviews clap their hands. But they come to nothing. The moral atmosphere is too pestilential. The force which there is in the world is all destructive and disintegrating, and heaven knows when any organizing life will show itself again.

We must keep what we have got to the latest moment and be thankful for him.

Serus in cœlum redeat.

"Cœlum" can do without your father better than we can.

Faithfully yours, J. A. FROUDE.

After my uncle Charles' death my father was very unwell, suffering from a liver attack, and hearing perpetual ghostly voices.

Sir Andrew Clark ordered him either to America or to Venice. We applied for berths in the next liner to Canada but found that all the best had been taken, so we determined to go to Venice, and the journey did in effect restore his health and silence the ghosts.

*June 13th.* We were at Munich and saw the modern picture gallery, where my father liked Wilkie's "Reading of the last Will," and a shipwreck off the coast of Essex, lit up by a weird light "like one of Danby's pictures."

In the evening we went to the Countess d'Alberg's (Lord Acton's mother-in-law) and met Dr Döllinger. He had a fine earnest countenance and my father was delighted with him. He told my father that since his youth a great change had come over Germany. Now, Germany was full of materialistic unbelief, whereas England, he thought, had "much of the true, broad and liberal faith, a faith which developes and grows more real as the centuries advance."

Next day we visited the Pinakothek. My father admired a picture of a sunny young man, with his hands crossed, by Rembrandt, also a Virgin by Titian, who, he said, "looked out on the world with a sad commanding eye." Charles V. with his projecting jaw and large massive hands struck him "as a truthful portrait."

From Munich we journeyed into a Bavarian valley where

> The mountain breaks,
> And seems with its accumulated crags
> To overhang the world;

and thence to Tegernsee to Lord Acton's, the most hospitable of houses. From Tegernsee we went to Innsbrück. There Professor Bickel called upon us from the University, full of having discovered a metre in the Hebrew of the Psalms.

We left Innsbrück for Landro (the Dolomites). The reflection of Monte Cristallo in the green lake, and the drive to Cortina my father thought remarkable. Innumerable ragged peaks rose about one, as he said "like ghosts of Chimborazo." The mountain meadows

were gay with forget-me-nots, blue gentians and pink daphnes, glorifying the upland slopes.

We asked a young maiden on the way whether she was not happy in this beautiful land. She answered, "I have been three summers in Cortina and my heart is always laughing like the summer." My father admired the great lonely mountain throne of Antelao with its sloping canopy of ridged snow, which rises in a grand sweep from the valley of Cortina. Next day we drove through a tract of firs, past the Antelao to Pieve di Cadore, the birthplace of Titian. The entrance of the valley looked sublime, and we seemed to recognize many backgrounds of Titian's pictures in the different valleys. We passed one lake, the Lago Morte, which my father said was like the lake from which "The Lady of the Lake rose": and pushed on to Venice, which we reached in a great thunderstorm. The best picture in Venice, he thought with Burne-Jones, is Venice itself as one glides in a gondola along the Grand Canal: but, having dreamt all his life of this city on the sea, he was disappointed with the side canals. The pictures themselves in the churches were generally in such dim light that he could scarcely see them, but Tintoretto's "Presentation of the Virgin" in the Church of the Madonna del Orto he particularly praised.

The Tintorettos struck him as most original, dramatic, and sublime in their treatment of subjects which had been often painted before. He stood long before a beautiful Bellini in the Church of Il Redentore.

He was fascinated by St Mark's, by the Doge's Palace and the Piazza, and by the blaze of colour in water and sky. We climbed the Campanile: thence we walked to the Library, where he could scarcely tear himself away from the Grimani Breviary.

"In gondolas by day and night" he quoted "Julian and Maddalo," and went out to see the sunsets, and

wished to wander by himself on the Lido, but liked most of all the burial-ground of the Jews, overgrown with poppies and thistles, a pathetic place. At the Armenian monastery the pomegranates were in flower, and a fat little Armenian monk brought him a book to sign, whereupon he wrote, to the monk's satisfaction:

With all good wishes
And all good dishes
A. T.

In the Piazza San Marco we met the sculptor Story, and on my father talking of "the lin-lan-lone of evening bells," heard from him how wonderful the winter ringing in a wind of the ice-sheathed forests in North America is; like the tinkle of innumerable bells all round, from far and near.

From Venice we went to Verona, and my father was enchanted by the romance of its situation, nestled among vine-clad hills, with the Adige rushing round the walls, and by the beautiful Giusti garden,—famous for its cypresses throughout two centuries,—that looks out toward the western hills.

From Verona we returned home by the Lago di Garda and Milan.

Over Sirmio, the peninsula of Catullus, we roamed all day. My father liked this, I think, the best of anything we had seen on our tour: its olives, its old ruins, and its green-sward stretching down to the blue lake with the mountains beyond.

Here he made his "Frater Ave atque Vale."

Row us out from Desenzano, to your Sirmione row!
So they row'd, and there we landed—O venusta Sirmio!
There to me thro' all the groves of olive in the summer glow,

There beneath the Roman ruin where the purple
flowers grow,
Came that "Ave atque Vale" of the poet's hopeless
woe,
Tenderest of Roman poets nineteen hundred years
ago,
"Frater Ave atque Vale" as we wander'd to and
fro
Gazing at the Lydian laughter of the Garda lake
below,
Sweet Catullus' all-but-island, olive-silvery Sirmio!

Miss Ritchie was staying at Farringford when we came back from our foreign travels. To her he dwelt with more pleasure on the row to Desenzano than on almost anything else, and on the associations of Sirmione with Catullus. The long July twilight had at last died away whilst he talked of all he had been seeing, and lights were brought, and I fetched him a volume of Catullus.

He made Miss Ritchie, who was no Latin scholar, follow the words as he read through some of his favourite poems. His finger moved from word to word, and he dwelt with intense satisfaction on the adequacy of the expression and of the sounds, on the mastery of the proper handling of quantity, and on the perfection of the art.

# CHAPTER XII.

## BALLADS AND POEMS. MY FATHER'S NOTES. "THE CUP."

### 1880.

The volume of the ballads and poems, dedicated by my father to his grandson "Golden-hair'd Ally," was published in my father's 71st year in 1880, and contains some of his most vigorous and dramatic poems.

His manuscript notes on them are as follows:

"'The First Quarrel' was founded on an Isle of Wight story. Dr Dabbs was the doctor. The poor woman quarrelled with her husband. He started the night of the quarrel for Jersey; the boat, in which he was, struck a reef and went down."

"'Rizpah' is founded on an incident which I saw thus related in some penny magazine called *Old Brighton*, lent me by my friend and neighbour Mrs Brotherton[1]:

"A conspicuous tombstone (at Brighton), to be read

[1] "I told him the story one day at Farringford, knowing it would touch him, and he came up to see my husband and me next day, and asked me to tell it him again: on which I gave him the little penny magazine I found it in. It was an unpretentious account of 'Old Brighton.' Many months after he took me up to his library, after a walk, and read me what he called 'Bones.' That was before it was called 'Rizpah' and published."

MARY BROTHERTON.

by everyone passing through the churchyard, bears the following truly extraordinary inscription:

PHŒBE HESSEL.

Who was born at Stepney, in the year 1713.
She served for many years as a Private Soldier in the
Fifth Regiment of Foot in different parts of Europe,
And in the year 1745 fought under the command of the
Duke of Cumberland, at the Battle of Fontenoy,
Where she received a Bayonet Wound in her Arm.
Her long life, which commenced in the Reign of
Queen Anne, extended to that of King George IV,
By whose munificence she received comfort and support
In her latter days. She died at Brighton,
Where she had long resided,
December 12th, 1821, aged 108.

"This epitaph gives the complete history of one of the most notable characters of Brighton, concerning whom it seems scarcely possible to say more than her tombstone records. For many years before her death, it should be mentioned that George IV. allowed her half-a-guinea a week. When the king saw her, and talked with her, he called her 'A jolly old fellow,' and offered her a guinea a week, which, with a rare moderation she refused, saying, 'Half that sum was enough to maintain her.' She is well remembered in Brighton still, as she used to sit in the sun against a house on the lower part of the Marine Parade. Her life was indeed an extraordinary one. After the death of her second husband, William Hessel, by the assistance of some friends, she purchased a donkey, and travelled with fish and other commodities to the villages about Brighton.

"It was in one of these journeys that she obtained such information as led to the arrest and conviction of Rooke and Howell for robbing the mail, a circumstance which made a considerable sensation at the close of the last century. They were gibbeted on the spot where the robbery was committed, and there is an affecting story connected with the body of Rooke. When the

elements had caused the clothes and flesh to decay, his aged mother, night after night, in all weathers, and the more tempestuous the weather the more frequent the visits, made a sacred pilgrimage to the lonely spot on the Downs, and it was noticed that on her return she always brought something away with her in her apron. Upon being watched it was discovered that the bones of the hanging man were the objects of her search, and as the wind and rain scattered them on the ground she conveyed them to her home. There she kept them, and, when the gibbet was stripped of its horrid burden, in the dead silence of the night she interred them in the hallowed enclosure of Old Shoreham Churchyard. What a sad story of a Brighton Rizpah!"

"'The Northern Cobbler,'" wrote my father, "is founded on a fact that I heard in early youth. A man set up a bottle of gin in his window when he gave up drinking, in order to defy the drink."

"The story of 'The Revenge,'" he wrote again, "is told finely by Sir Walter Raleigh and Froude, also by Bacon. Sir Richard Grenville commanded Sir Walter Raleigh's first colony which went out to Virginia." "'This story of 'The Revenge,'' says Froude, 'struck a deeper terror, though it was but the action of a single ship, into the hearts of the Spanish people, it dealt a more deadly blow upon their fame and moral strength than the Armada itself.'

"Sir Richard, after this desperate fight of his one ship against the Spanish fleet, 'commanded the master gunner, whom he knew to be a most resolute man, to split and sink the ship, that thereby nothing might remain of glory in victory to the Spaniards, seeing in so many hours they were not able to take her, having had fifteen hours' time, fifteen thousand men, and fifty-three sail of men of war to perform it withal.'"

When Sir Richard is dying, he cries out in the poem:

"I have fought for Queen and Faith like a valiant man and true;
I have only done my duty as a man is bound to do:
With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard Grenville die!"
And he fell upon their decks, and he died.

"His exact words were[1]: 'Here die I Richard Greenfield, with a joyful and quiet mind, for that I have ended my life as a true soldier ought to do, that have fought for his country, Queen, religion and honour. Whereby my soul most joyful departeth out of this body, and shall always leave behind it an everlasting fame of a valiant and true soldier that has done his duty as he was bound to do.' When he had finished these or such other like words, he gave up the Ghost with a great and stout courage, and no man could perceive any true sign of heaviness in him."

The germ of the poem of "The Revenge" was, as has been stated in the Journal, the one line

At Flores in the Azores Sir Richard Grenville lay.

"The Sisters" was partly founded on the story, known to him, of a girl who consented to be bridesmaid to her sister, although she secretly loved the bridegroom. The night after the wedding the poor bridesmaid ran away from her home. They searched for her, high and low, and at last she was discovered knocking at the church door, in "the pitiless rush of autumn rain," her wits gone:

"The great Tragedian, that had quench'd herself
In that assumption of the bridesmaid."

The simile taken from the lake at Llanberis was a personal experience. He always said that he remem-

[1] This is Linschooten's account.

bered the lake as it looked in a flash of lightning, not as he saw it afterwards in the daytime.

The scene of the picnic in the wood was also a personal experience in the New Forest.

And these lines he would quote as his own belief:

> My God, I would not live
> Save that I think this gross hard-seeming world
> Is our misshaping vision of the Powers
> Behind the world, that make our griefs our gains.

Among his Lincolnshire poems "The Village Wife" is the only one that is in any way a portrait. The rest of them are purely imaginative.

> Heäps an' heäps o' booöks, I ha' see'd 'em, belong'd to the Squire,
> But the lasses 'ed teärd out leaves i' the middle to kindle the fire.

This really happened to some of the most valuable books in the great library formed by Johnson's friend, Bennet Langton.

My father's note on "The Children's Hospital" is: "A true story told me by Mary Gladstone. The doctors and hospital are unknown to me. The two children are the only characters, in this little dramatic poem, taken from life."

Miss Gladstone's letter ran thus:

There was a little girl in the hospital, and as the doctor and nurse passed by her bed they stopped, for her eyes were shut and they thought she was asleep. "We must try that operation to-morrow," he said, "but I am afraid she will not get through it." I forget what the child said, until Annie the girl in the next bed suddenly suggested, "I know what I should do, I should ask Jesus to help me." "Yes, I will, but oh! Annie, how will he know it's me, when there are such a lot of us in the ward?" "I'll tell you," said Annie, "put your arms outside the

counterpane." The next morning the little girl's arms were outside the counterpane and her eyes were closed. She was dead.

About "The Defence of Lucknow" my father says: "The old flag, used during the defence of the Residency, was hoisted on the Lucknow flagstaff by General Wilson, and the soldiers who still survived from the siege were all mustered on parade in honour of this poem, when my son Lionel (who died on his journey from India) visited Lucknow. A tribute overwhelmingly touching."

"I took as subject of a poem," he goes on, "Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, because he is a fine historical figure. He was named by the people 'The good Lord Cobham,' a friend of Henry V. As follower of Wyclif, he was cited before a great council of the Church, which was presided over by Archbishop Arundel, and was condemned to be burnt alive for heresy."

"My poem of 'Columbus' was founded on the following passage in Washington Irving's *Life of Columbus*":

The caravels set sail early in October, bearing off Columbus, shackled like the vilest of culprits, amid the scoffs and shouts of a miscreant rabble, who took a brutal joy in heaping insults on his venerable head, and sent curses after him from the island he had so recently added to the civilized world. The worthy Villejo, as well as Andreas Martin, the master of the caravel, felt deeply grieved at his situation. They would have taken off his irons, but to this he would not consent. "No," said he proudly, "Their Majesties commanded me by letter to submit to whatever Bobadillo should order in their name; by their authority he has put upon me these chains; I will wear them until they shall order them to be taken off, and I will afterwards preserve them, as relics and memorials of the reward of my services." "He did so," adds his son Fernando in his history; "I saw them always hanging in his cabinet, and he requested that when he died they might be buried with him."

It was written after repeated entreaties from certain prominent Americans that he would commemorate the discovery of America in verse.

My father continues: "The oldest form of 'Maeldune' is in the *Book of the Dun Cow* (1160). I read the legend in Joyce's *Celtic Legends*, but most of the details are mine."

By this story he intended to represent in his own original way the Celtic genius, and he wrote the poem with a genuine love of the peculiar exuberance of the Irish imagination.

The blank-verse lyric of "The Battle of Brunanburh[1]" suggested to Edward Fitzgerald that the choruses of Greek plays ought to be rendered in this fashion. My father himself liked the rush of the alliterative verse, as giving something of the old English war-song.

The struggle of standards,
The rush of the javelins,
The crash of the charges,
The wielding of weapons—
The play that they play'd with
The children of Edward.

The few lines addressed to Dante have a curious history. In 1865 Lord Houghton met a brother of my father's friend Canon Warburton, and said to him, "Tennyson is not going to the Dante Centenary, but he has given me some lines which I am to recite to the Florentines," and he then repeated the lines. The same evening Canon Warburton met his brother who observed, "Milnes has just been saying to me some lines which Tennyson has given him to recite at the Centenary, for he is not going himself." He then repeated the lines. Some fifteen years or so later, my father was talking to the Canon about the probably short-lived duration of all modern poetical fame. "Who," said he, "will

[1] See page 272.

read Alfred Tennyson one hundred years hence? And look at Dante after six hundred years!" "That," Warburton answered, "is a renewal of the garland-of-a-day superstition." "What do you mean?" "Your own words!" "What can you mean?" "Don't you remember those lines you gave to Milnes to recite for you at the Dante Centenary?" My father had quite forgotten the lines. Warburton then wrote out the lines as far as he could remember them, and shortly afterwards I sent a letter to the Canon, telling him that my father had recalled the correct version of the poem.

My father received many complimentary sonnets about this volume.

The following is the kind of brief acknowledgment which he sent.

Pray accept my best thanks for your energetic and too complimentary sonnet.

A. TENNYSON.

I thank you for your kind words. I rejoice to hear that you are happy in the possession of those good gifts of which you speak.

As to the rest, the poet can scarcely be judged with fairness in one age or another. He must abide the judgment of the ages.

A. TENNYSON.

Late in 1880 my father had completed "The Cup," begun after he had finished "The Falcon" in Nov. 1879[1]. This story from Plutarch first commended itself to him in a paragraph by Lecky in his *History of European Morals*[2]:

A powerful noble once solicited the hand of a Galatian lady named Camma, who, faithful to her husband, resisted all his

[1] Both plays were published (Macmillan) 1884.

[2] Lecky, Vol. II. p. 342 (ed. 1894).

entreaties. Resolved at any hazard to succeed, he caused her husband to be assassinated, and when she took refuge in the temple of Diana, and enrolled herself among the priestesses, he sent noble after noble to induce her to relent. After a time he ventured himself into her presence. She feigned a willingness to yield, but told him it was first necessary to make a libation to the goddess. She appeared as a priestess before the altar bearing in her hand a cup of wine, which she had poisoned. She drank half of it herself, handed the remainder to her guilty lover, and when he had drained the cup to the dregs, burst into a fierce thanksgiving that she had been permitted to avenge, and was soon to rejoin, her murdered husband. (Plutarch, *De Mulier. Virt.*)

Sir Charles Newton helped my father in the archæology of the period. He wrote:

*March 6th*, 1879.

I see no reason for doubting Plutarch's statement that Artemis was worshipped in Galatia, tho' it is not corroborated as yet by coins or inscriptions, and the particular Artemis so worshipped would most probably be closely allied in attributes to the Tauric Artemis, and would thus correspond with your conception of the Galatian Artemis (the goddess of Nature). The epithet πατρῷος in the *Amatorius* applied to the priesthood shows that the priesthood was hereditary. It may be inferred therefore that Camma was of noble birth. The story as told by Plutarch is most dramatic. If I find anything more you shall have it. In the meantime you may rely on my silence.

Mr Knowles writes, Dec. 4th, 1880:

Irving is in a great state of enthusiasm and excitement, and he is most anxious that you should read over the Play, not only to himself and Ellen Terry but to all the Company which is to enact it. This is a most admirable suggestion, and I hope extremely that you will see your way to say "yes" to it. He would like it to be on next Thursday week, the 25th inst., when Ellen Terry will be back in town and everything advanced enough to make such a reading of the greatest and most opportune value.

My father accepted the invitation, and happily but few alterations from the first manuscript copy were found necessary for the stage-edition. Three short speeches for Synorix were added, Act I. Sc. 3; and at the end of Act II. the quarrel between Sinnatus and Synorix was lengthened by two lines, and Camma was made to interrogate Sinnatus as to what Synorix had said, and three or four entrances were made less abrupt. Irving inserted most of the stage-directions, and devised the magnificent scenery[1], and the drama was produced by him with signal success at the Lyceum, and played to crowded houses. He wrote to my father, "I hope that the splendid success of your grand Tragedy will be followed by other triumphs equally great[2]."

Ellen Terry, who played the noble part of "Camma" magnificently, thanked him for his "great little play."

Browning was loud in praise of "The Cup"[3]; and my father wrote to him:

FARRINGFORD, FRESHWATER,
*Feb. 8th*, 1880.

MY DEAR BROWNING,

That you, whom Professor Morley calls a born dramatist, should approve of my little play, is good news to me and mine. I hope to see you soon. * * * * We three greet you lovingly, and are all yours.

A. TENNYSON.

[1] I understand from Mr Knowles that he helped Irving to design the Temple scene.

[2] My father said, "Irving has not hit off my Synorix, who is a subtle blend of Roman refinement and intellectuality, and barbarian, self-satisfied sensuality."

[3] "The Cup" was produced January 3rd, 1881; and ran for over one hundred and thirty nights.

Of our Aldworth life in 1880 and of my father's talk about "Becket" and "The Cup" William Allingham gives a pleasant account in his private diary.

Haslemere. *Thursday, Aug. 5th*, 1880. Very fine. Helen and I started about 3.30 to walk to Tennyson's as invited. In the shady lane the carriage overtook us. Tennyson had kindly called for us. He was in the carriage, with his little grandson, Alfred, on his nurse's lap, and Mr Fields, an American guest. Little Alfred, aged 2, had on the great Alfred's black sombrero, and the child's straw hat with a blue ribbon was stuck on the top of the poet's huge head, and so they drove gravely along. I followed on foot along the heath-fringed road on Blackdown, overlooking the vast expanses of light and shadow, golden cornfields, blue distances from Leith Hill to Chanctonbury Ring. Walked through the house, long hall open at each end, and found tea on the further lawn, smooth, shut in with shrubs. The view of the lower windows of the house is now shut up by the growth of twigs and leaves. On the lawn, Mrs Tennyson lying horizontal in an invalid chair with a hood to it, wrapt in furs, and looking sadly pale and worn. Mrs Hodgson (of Lythe Hill) and sister, visitors. Mr and Mrs Fields of Philadelphia (from Egypt and Spain) two days' guests, Hallam, alert and friendly, Alfred Tennyson in sombrero, a gray suit, broad-shouldered, somewhat stooping, looking peaceful and contented. He has been at Venice, Cadore, etc. with Hallam.

I told him Dr Martineau, who is 75, had just climbed a mountain in Strathspey 4000 ft. high.

*T.* When I was 67 I climbed a mountain 7000 ft. high; the guide said he never saw a man of my age *si léger*.

We spoke of the stage. "Irving won't answer letters." Perhaps the only way, I suggest, to have any peace.

*T.* I often think I ought to have gone on the same plan. (But in fact Mrs Tennyson has done nearly all the answering.) I gave Irving my "Thomas à Becket": he said it was magnificent, but it would cost him £3000 to mount it: he couldn't afford the risk. If well put on the stage it would act for a time, and it would bring me credit (he said), but it wouldn't pay. He said, "If you give me something short I'll do it." So I wrote him a play in two acts "The Cup." The success of a piece doesn't

depend on its literary merit or even on its stage effect, but on its *hitting* somehow. Miss Terry said, "We act mechanically after a long run, but on a first night nobody suspects how we have our hearts in our mouths."

Tennyson did not much approve Irving's "Shylock," "He made you pity Shylock too much."

*T.* I told Miss Terry she ought, as advocate, to stand on the steps to gain advantage, instead of standing on the level, a little female thing, and looking up at him. The worst of writing for the stage is, you must keep some actor always in your mind.

As we went to another part of the grounds he recalled the direction in *Sakontala*, "You will go straight on till you come to a Brahmin buried to his middle in a pit full of termite ants and then turn to the left." He said the story of the Mayor of Galway, who for the sake of justice condemned his own son to death, and then hanged him, was fine, would make a tragedy.

# CHAPTER XIII.

## SPEDDING'S DEATH. "THE PROMISE OF MAY." GLADSTONE.

### 1881–1883.

At the beginning of 1881 we were again in London. My father sat to Millais for his portrait[1], now in Mr Knowles' possession, and Mrs Andrew Hichens generally drove him to his sittings. She says that she remembers what numberless stories, suggested by any passing sight in the streets, he would tell her.

An interesting discussion took place one evening after dinner between Mr Gladstone, Froude, Tyndall and my father on historical belief in the immortality of the soul. My father and Gladstone spoke strongly on the side of belief. The latter ended the discussion by saying: "Let the scientific men stick to their science, and leave philosophy and religion to the poets, philosophers and theologians."

My father's letters were at this period generally of the shortest, as for instance this which he wrote to Sir Henry Parkes, the Premier of New South Wales, in May 1881:

I always feel with the Empire, and I read with great interest of these first steps in Federation.

Go on, and prosper in the good work, and with many thanks for the Blue Book,

I am yours very truly,

A. TENNYSON.

[1] Millais said to me that this was the finest portrait he had ever painted.

And this which he sent to Roden Noel:

"I congratulate you on your new volume, and trust that it will fight the good fight against materialism successfully."

And this to an unknown correspondent:

"I thank you for your poem 'To the Dead Premier.' The feeling of American brotherhood which it bespeaks cannot but be welcome to an Englishman.

Thank you also for your courteous words to myself."

In this year Spedding, one of my father's oldest and most intimate friends, died in St George's Hospital, having been run over by a cab in Hill Street. His loss was deeply mourned by my father.

Edward Fitzgerald wrote:

Laurence has written me some account of his visit to St George's: J. S. all patience, only somewhat wishful to be at home; somewhat weary with lying without book or even watch for company. What a man! as in life so in death, "which," as Montaigne says, "proves what is at the bottom of the vessel." I had not seen him for more than 20 years, and should never have seen him again unless in the street, where cabs were crossing! He did not *want* to see me, he wanted nothing I think, but I was always thinking of him and should have done till my own life's end. I know I only wrote to him about twice a year: he only cared to answer when one put some definite question to him, and I had usually as little to ask as to tell. I was thinking that, but for the cab, I might even now be asking him what I was to think of his cousin Froude's *Carlyle Reminiscences.* I see but one quotation in the book, which is "of the days that are no more," which clung to him when his sorrow came, as it will to many and many who will come after him.

I certainly hope that some pious and judicious hand will gather and choose from our dear Spedding's letters: no fear of indelicate personality with *him*, you know: and many things

which all the world would be the wiser and better for. Archdeacon Allen sent me the other day a letter about Darwin's Philosophy, so wise and so true, so far as I could judge, only, though written off, unfit to go as it was into print, and do all the world good. Will not Master Alfred say something on this score? Why it would be a good work for Hallam, a pious work.

It was fine too of Carlyle ordering to be laid among his own homely kindred in the village of his birth without questions of Westminster Abbey. So think I, at least: and dear James Spedding at Mirehouse, where your husband and I stayed, very near upon 50 years ago, in 1835 it was, in the month of May, when the daffodils were out in a field before the house and I see them, though not in such force, owing to cold winds, before my window now. Does A. T. remember them? And what J. S. persisted in calling "gale" which grew by the lake? No other answer could be got in spite of demand for extra definition. "If not *gale* I don't know what it is."

Matthew is in his grave, but now methinks I see him stand as at that moment

In the days that are no more.

Tell Alfred that, since this happened, I have turn'd to him "for Auld Lang Syne," and did not write to any of the Spedding party, whom I scarce ever saw, because I thought they would have enough of nearer and dearer friends to write to. I should still wish them to know, if they know of my existence, that I had a report every day from Mowbray Donne, who lives near them.

Here is a long letter, dear Mrs Tennyson, which you will like well enough. You give me no address with your letter.

Mr Norman Lockyer wrote as to a red rainbow my father had seen at Aldworth opposite the sunset:

I have been much interested by Macmillan's account of the red rainbow which you saw. It is I think the first I have heard of, and I hope you will send us a note to *Nature* on the subject, as it gives a fresh interest to sunrise and sunset phenomena.

In November his poem of "Despair" was published in the *Nineteenth Century*. Much bitter criticism followed, since the public did not recognize it as a "dramatic monologue." Miss Gladstone (Mrs Harry Drew) had suggested the subject in a short paragraph which she sent my father, and which he somewhat altered, and put as the heading of his poet's protest against the denial of these two great truths of his faith which were to him the life of life.

"A man and his wife having lost faith in a God, and hope of a life to come, and being utterly miserable in this, resolve to end themselves by drowning."

## 1882.

When we were at 86 Eaton Square in February, the old version of "Hands all round," written in 1852, was recast by request of Sir Frederic Young into a patriotic song for the Empire. The reprint was published with my mother's setting (arranged by Professor Stanford), and sung all over Great Britain and the Colonies on the Queen's birthday.

Sir Alfred Lyall writes about the reception of the song in India:

I think I should write a line to tell you that your song of "Hands all round," part of which you repeated to me one day last spring when I had the pleasure of walking with you across Blackdown, was sung in chorus, and very well sung, on the Queen's birthday here. We had collected all the English folk for a ball, and the song was new to by far the greater part of them: it interested all very much.

India is just now, so far as one can see, quiet throughout its length and breadth; and when the country is quiet it is apt to be dull, except to those for whom it finds incessant work. Of course the Mahommedans, of whom we have between thirty and forty millions, are watching very closely our proceedings

in Egypt, and are not easily disabused of the idea that we intend to seize the country and to upset another Mahommedan dynasty. But I hope we shall rapidly and successfully clear away the complications that have been gathering there; it does not suit us to be constantly fighting against Mahommedans; and, however plainly we may prove that our expeditions are just and necessary, the Asiatic persists in believing us still to be a fierce, unscrupulous, earth-conquering race.

Nainee Tal, where I now am, is a very picturesque little settlement in the Himalayas; my house looks down on a fine mountain lake; and beyond, the level plains stretch far away. I may take this occasion of expressing the pleasure that my good fortune in meeting you at home gave me. I fear it may be some years before I see England again.

The Executive Committee of the "Good Templars" were offended because "First drink a health" was the opening line of the poem. I had to answer a letter of remonstrance in these terms:

"My father begs to thank the Committee of the Executive of the Grand Lodge of England Good Templars for their resolution. No one honours more highly the good work done by them than my father. I must, however, ask you to remember that the common cup has in all ages been the sacred symbol of unity, and that my father only used the word 'drink' in reference to this symbol."

Further, I might have mentioned that my father had supported a movement for the closing of public houses on Sunday throughout the Isle of Wight.

On Aug. 9th my father and I started for Dovedale. From Ashbourne we drove through wide-sweeping valleys to Ilam, and stayed in the "Izaak Walton" at the entrance of Dovedale.

Ilam is a "land of streams," and round the hotel were the greenest of meadows. We walked up by the Dove, through a richly-wooded glen with gray pinnacles of limestone here and

there. The vivid green of the ash trees, the islands of meadow-sweet, willow-herb and harebell, and the rippling stream itself, enchanted my father. We lunched at the Doveholes, about which were circling innumerable martins. We then sauntered down the stream, and he smoked a lonely pipe near where the Dove rushes round beech-boles into the Manifold. He always kept up the habit of smoking a solitary pipe when he came to a place which he particularly liked. "I want my pipe alone for ten minutes," he would say.

*Aug.* 10*th.* Went by the Manifold, gliding under witch-elms, to Ilam Hall. This valley is Johnson's "Happy Valley." In the afternoon we strolled up Dovedale again. My father said, "The Dove is various in its dales, like a great genius. Does not this particular Dovedale remind you of 'lætantia loca aquarum'?" He quoted an unpublished line of his on a Norway torrent,

Storming and streaming through its wooded isles.

*Aug.* 11*th.* Drove over broad backs of downs, strewn with villages, to Hartington, walked to Hall Dale and beautiful Beresford Dale—fine piles of rock there with trees and rich green-sward. Mill Dale a contrast—sinuous, spacious and bare.

After another day we returned, and his verdict was that Dovedale was one of the most unique and delicious places in England.

## "THE PROMISE OF MAY."

In October Mrs Bernard Beere resolved to act "The Promise of May" at The Globe, after having heard my father read it at Aldworth. She wrote thus:

*October 7th*, 1882.

Even at the risk of troubling you, I must write to thank you for letting us have the immense advantage of hearing you read your play. The comedy-touches alone, as you read them, ought to make the success of the piece. I am particularly fascinated by Dora's speech in the 3rd Act, when left alone after paying

her people. I hope to be able to interpret it in a way that would please you.

Previously Mr and Mrs Kendal had read the play, and Mr Kendal had written as follows:

It is full of dramatic incident and character, but it appears to me, if I may be allowed to say so, that the dramatic incident and character are so *strong*, the whole requires to be very much more fully developed! When next we meet I can better explain myself.

In November "The Promise of May" was produced. I am bound to say that my father had written it, somewhat unwillingly, at the importunate entreaty of a friend who had urged him to try his hand on a modern village tragedy.

The unlucky piece ran for five weeks, but received very rough treatment on the first night, owing to the advertisements having announced that it was an attack on Socialism, and to the fact that it had been imperfectly edited for the stage. The public had mistaken the purpose of the author. The temper of the house was shown even before the performance began, for the pit doors were broken. One of the most popular playwrights of the day said, "If I had had that play for twenty minutes, I could have made it one of the successes of the season. The hero is unconventional; he is a thinker and is consequently not understood." This is probably a true criticism. The dialect scenes and the songs, and especially "The last load home," were very effective.

In the middle of one of the performances Lord Queensberry rose, and in the name of Free Thought protested against "Mr Tennyson's abominable caricature."

I subjoin the analysis of the hero's character by my brother, as it best gives my father's conception.

Edgar is not, as the critics will have it, a freethinker, drawn into crime by his Communistic theories; Edgar is not even an honest Radical, nor a sincere follower of Schopenhauer; he is nothing thorough and nothing sincere. He has no conscience until he is brought face to face with the consequences of his crime, and in the awakening of that conscience the poet has manifested his fullest and subtlest strength. At our first introduction to Edgar, we see him perplexed with the haunting of a pleasure that has sated him. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die" has been his motto; but we can detect that his appetite for all pleasure has begun to pall. He repeats wearily the formulæ of a philosophy which he has followed because it suits his mode of life. He plays with these formulæ, but they do not satisfy him. So long as he had on him the zest of libertinism he did not, in all probability, trouble himself with philosophy. But now his selfishness compels him to take a step of which he feels the wickedness and repugnancy. He must endeavour to justify himself to himself. The companionship of the girl he has betrayed no longer gives him pleasure; he hates her tears because they remind him of himself—his proper self. He abandons her with a pretence of satisfaction; but the philosophical formulæ he repeats no more satisfy him than they satisfy the poor girl whom he deserts. Her innocence has not, however, been wantonly sacrificed by the dramatist. She has sown the seed of repentance in her seducer, though the fruit is slow in ripening. Years after he returns, like the ghost of a murderer to the scene of his crime. He feels remorse. He is ashamed of it; he battles against it; he hurls the old formulæ at it; he acts the cynic more thoroughly than ever. But he is changed. He feels a desire to "make amends." Yet that desire is still only a form of selfishness. He has abandoned the "Utopian Idiocy" of Communism. Perhaps, as he says, with a self-mockery that makes the character so individual and remarkable, "because he has inherited estates." His position of gentleman is forced on his notice; he would qualify himself for it, selfishly and without doing excessive penance. To marry the surviving sister and rescue the old father from ruin would be a meritorious act. He sets himself to perform it. At first everything goes well for him; the old weapons of fascination, that had worked the younger sister's ruin, now conquer the heart of the elder. He is comfortable in his

scheme of reparation, and lays that flattering "unction to his soul."

Suddenly, however, the girl whom he has betrayed, and whom he thought dead, returns; she hears him repeating to another the words of love she herself had heard from him and believed. "Edgar!" she cries, and staggers forth from her concealment, as she forgives him with her last breath.

Then, and not till then, the true soul of the man rushes to his lips; he recognizes his wickedness, he knows the blankness of his life. That is his punishment.

He feels then, and will always feel, aspirations after good which he can never or only imperfectly fulfil. The position of independence, on which he prided himself, is wrested from him, he is humiliated. The instrument of his selfish repentance turns on him with a forgiveness that annihilates him; the bluff and honest farmer whom he despises triumphs over him, not with the brute force of an avenging hand, but with the pre-eminence of superior morality. Edgar quits the scene, never again, we can believe, to renew his libertine existence, but to expiate with lifelong contrition the monstrous wickedness of the past.

In the midst of the storm among the Freethinkers my father answered one of the many correspondents who admired the play:

"I am grateful for your letter. I had received others to the same purport.

I had a feeling that I would at least strive (in my plays) to bring the true drama of character and life back again. I gave them one leaf out of the great book of truth and nature."

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Through Lowell the Pennsylvanians asked for a poem on Penn, which my father felt himself at that time unable to write, although he had a great love for Penn:

10 LOWNDES SQUARE,
*Nov. 7th*, 1882.

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

I enclose the note of our Quaker friends and hope you will say yes to them if you can. Perhaps a few verses are harder to do than a good many.

At any rate, you can do them if anybody can, and a few will answer.

I think it pretty that they should recognize you as the laureate of the Tongue and not only of the Nation.

I send also a small tribute of baccy. I can't see that it does you any harm if I may judge by your latter harvest.

Very sincerely yours,

J. R. LOWELL.

## *To the Pennsylvanians.*

86 EATON SQUARE, S.W.

MY FRIENDS,

I would have written ere this to thank you for the honour you have done me, in asking me to write a few verses on the 200th anniversary of the founding of Pennsylvania, but I have had the gout in my right hand and writing was impossible, and just now it seems to me that a verse upon anything is beyond my power; but does that matter much while you have your noble old Longfellow among you and other poets, who might be more likely than myself to give you something which would not fall below the subject? I do not say that I will not make the attempt, but I cannot promise you anything, except that I will be with you in spirit on the 8th of November (1883), and rejoice with your rejoicing; for, since I have been ill, I have read the life of your noble countryman, and mine, William Penn, and find him no "comet of a season," but the fixt light of a dark and graceless age, shining on into the present, not only great

but good, καλὸς κἀγαθός as the Athenians said of their best.

Believe me most faithfully yours,

A. TENNYSON.

*Letters from Edward Fitzgerald to Hallam Tennyson.*

*Nov. 30th*, 1882.

Thank you very much for your letter. I know that you have plenty to do in that way: but I will look to you for a few lines of reply to my half-yearly enquiries. I expect no more; and you will not have to write what little I ask for many years to come.

I used to require the same from Carlyle's niece when he grew unable to write, and, latterly, to dictate for himself. Now he is gone, I wrote about a fortnight ago for a word about herself: for she had always been very kind in answering me before. In her reply it "came into her head," she says, to tell me how she happened to see our Spedding about half-an-hour before you know what, walking briskly toward Piccadilly, looking cold, and wearing a cape such as her uncle used. When you speak of having lately returned from Newstead, and Sherwood (whither you had gone to gather local colour for "The Foresters"), I suppose you mean *before* the leaves had fallen from the trees; or were you content with the gnarled trunks? The gale of a month ago (which blew down four of my few trees) play'd the deuce even with the foliage of the oak which generally hangs on for months longer: but it may not have been in merry Sherwood as hereabout. And you did not go to old Lincolnshire? Aldis Wright, who went on Bursar business to Horncastle, went also to Somersby, not on business, and sent me a large photo of the Rectory, but it looked to me new and hard: not half so good in my eyes as the feeble lithograph which your father (I suppose) gave me years ago.

I think he must have been good-humouredly amused at Lord Selborne's adjudicating the palm between me and Mr Morshead (in our translations of *Agamemnon*). I did not know he had that great work to lend: till I remembered my poor Donne writing me something about it. I say "my poor Donne" because he is now in a very helpless state of mind and body; so

much so that he scarce seems conscious of any but his own family's society (so Mrs Kemble writes me), otherwise I should go up to see him. Thompson, Trinity's Master, is also in a very feeble state of *body*. All this is rather for your father than for you: and not very cheerful matter either for him or me.

But tell him (à propos of the Greek) that, when I saw his version of your "Battle of Brunanburh," I said to myself, and afterwards to others, "There's the way to render Æschylus' Chorus at last!" unless indeed it might overpower *any* blank verse dialogue. When I said in my printed word of apology, that such a work was for a *poet* to do, I was not thinking of Mr Browning. But the poet must follow his own will and genius.

Annie Thackeray's paper on Mrs Barbauld is very pretty, as also her book on Sévigné, but of the latter she gives little more than *one* side as probably best suited to the purpose of her book. How can she say, however, that there is more of the laughable than of the humorous in those letters?

Well, you have had enough of mine at any rate. I need not say that I am right glad that your father is well, and your mother fairly so. You are I take for granted "all right" as the fashion is now to say. Of myself I need not complain, though not quite, as Sévigné somewhere says, so well that "I cannot think what God means to do with me."

I am yours sincerely,

*The Laird of Littlegrange.*

WOODBRIDGE, 1882.

MY DEAR HALLAM,

I believe I ought to be ashamed of reviving the little thing (*Euphranor*) which accompanies this letter. My excuse must be that I have often been asked for a copy when I had no more to give; and a visit to Cambridge last summer, to the old familiar places, if not faces, made me take it up once more and turn it into what you now see. I should certainly not send a copy to you or yours but for what relates to your father in it. He did not object so far as I know to what I said of him, though not by name, in a former edition; but there is more of him in this, though still not by name, nor, as you see, intended for publication. All of this you can read to him if you please at pp. 25 and 56. I do not ask him to say that he approves of

what is said or meant to be said in his honour, and I only ask you to tell me if he disapproves of it going any further. I owed you a letter in return for the kind one you sent me, and *if I do not hear from you to the contrary*, I shall take silence, if not for consent, at least for publication. I really did and do wish my first, which is also my last, little work to record, for a few years at least, my love and admiration of that dear old fellow, my old friend.

Ah, if you all of you were living out of the reach of many guests, at Locksley Hall even, I might answer your kind invitations in person. I tell my dear old Frederick that, if ever I cross the seas again, it will be to visit him, but I am not the less grateful to you and yours for your thought of me, being ever yours and theirs.

E. F. G.

## 1883.

In April 1883 my father and I stayed with Dr Bradley at the Deanery, Westminster, where, when in London, in the later years of his life he oftenest liked to be.

On this occasion Archdeacon Farrar asked him to write an epitaph on Caxton for the painted window in St Margaret's, placed there by the printers of London to his memory. He willingly complied with the Archdeacon's request, and wrote the lines:

Thy prayer was "Light more Light while Time shall last,"
Thou sawest a glory growing on the night,
But not the shadows which that light would cast,
Till shadows vanish in the Light of Light.

With the exception of that on Sir John Franklin in Westminster Abbey, he thought this the best of his epitaphs.

One evening Mr Gladstone came to the Deanery to meet my father. Among other subjects they talked of Ireland. Mr Gladstone told us that he felt irritated, having been badgered to death by Irish obstruction.

Then he related this story. "Some Irish labourers from South Ireland had walked up to the North of Ireland, and crossed to the northern English counties to cut the 'Sassenach's wheat,' and a Yorkshire farmer had lent them a barn where they might sleep, and next season, when they came north, they carried on their shoulders by turns a keg of whiskey as a present to the farmer." Whereupon my father observed that he feared that the Irish people were seldom grateful to England: adding however that, when he was in Ireland during the great famine year, he had one day watched an English ship, laden with corn, sail into an Irish harbour, and a peasant had said to him, "There, your honour, there's England like a good sister doing what she can to save Ireland."

The Dean, I think, interposed: "I hear one of the Phœnix Park murderers has been let off to-day." Mr Gladstone became much excited and raising his voice very loud exclaimed, "What! is it possible?"

It turned out to be the driver of the car which had carried the murderers.

The Prime Minister had softened about Parnell. In Downing Street, a year or two before, he had denounced him to us as if he were the leader of a great revolution and the real cause of the implacability of Ireland; but Parnell's offer to resign his seat in the House of Commons, after the murders of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr Burke, had evidently impressed Mr Gladstone as most unselfish, and he now felt generously towards him. Throughout Lady Frederick Cavendish had behaved nobly. When she saw Gladstone just after the tragedy she spoke of her husband: "Uncle William," she said, "you did right to send him."

On another evening my father went to *Much Ado About Nothing* at the Lyceum.

He liked the acting of "Beatrice" best in the later scenes; but thought that Ellen Terry ought to have been more of 'the great lady' in her playing of the part. He spoke highly of the trouble which Irving had taken; but he still considered Irving's best Shakespearian study was Richard III., especially in his witty and sardonic moments.

The next morning we wandered about the Abbey for a long time. We climbed up to the chantry, and, while the organ and voices of the choristers were sounding through the cathedral, my father suddenly said: "It is beautiful, but what empty and awful mockery if there were no God!"

This year his old and valued friend Fitzgerald died, and my father wrote of him:

Gone into darkness, that full light
Of friendship! past, in sleep, away
By night, into the deeper night!
The deeper night? A clearer day
Than our poor twilight dawn on earth—
If night, what barren toil to be!
What life, so maim'd by night, were worth
Our living out? Not mine to me
Remembering all the golden hours
Now silent, and so many dead,
And him the last.

Fitz's last letter had been as humorous and full of warm friendship as ever.

*From Edward Fitzgerald to Hallam Tennyson.*

*April 19th*, 1883.

MY DEAR HALLAM,

It is now some six months since I heard of you all, from Annie Ritchie, I think. So be a good boy and write

me just enough to tell me how it fares with mother, and father, all your party.

Of myself I will tell you that I got through what should have been winter well enough; yes, and even through the March that was winter; but, since sun and wind (east wind) combined, I have been somewhat croaky again.

By the way, do you understand by Lady Macbeth's raven the bird himself, or (as I had always supposed) the messenger who had but breath to deliver his message, as Aldis Wright interprets? and *may* old Hamlet's (does papa remember my "Gimlet Prince of Dunkirk"?) "eternal Blazon" mean not so much of the *Eternal* as of the *Infernal* world, as Wright thinks *possible* from the use of the word in other places by "Williams," "the divine Villiams," as in the case of Fags, an "eternal" willain. I fear I had never even thought of the word but as meaning "*long-winded*," which however I do not propose to the commentators.

This, among other things, Wright and I talked about when he was with me here at Easter, which reminds me of a *crow* (not a *raven*) I have to pick with your father. For Wright had heard from someone that he, the Laureate, had added to his wreath one of the very grandest lines in all blank verse,

"A Mister Wilkinson, a clergyman"—

of which I was the author while speaking of my brother-in-law, but which the paltry poet took up as it fell from my inspired lips and has adopted for his own.

You see that bronchitis, ever flourishing his dart over me, fails to make me graver, that is at least while referring to my dear old comrade, whom I should call "master," and with whom (in spite, perhaps *because*, of his being rather a "gloomy" soul sometimes, as Carlyle wrote to Emerson) I always did talk more nonsense than to anyone, I believe. Pray heaven I may not be trifling unseasonably with him now, that is, when he or his may not be in the proper mood for it. Write me word of this, dear Hallam, and believe me in sober earnest,

Yours and all yours as ever at 75,

E. FITZGERALD.

At this time the following letter was sent by my father to a working man who asked whether he should adopt poetry as a profession:

"I write in compliance with your request, tho' I fear that I can say little to comfort you. Believe me, however, that I am grieved for your loneliness and your sorrow.

Let me hope that you, having, as I think, found the God of Love, will feel day by day less lonely among your fellow-men: for, loving God, you cannot but grow in love towards them, and so forget yourself in them, since love begets love.

As to your poem it is so much the habit of the age to try and express thought and feeling in verse, each one for himself, that there are not I suspect many listeners (for such work as yours), and therefore poetry is not generally profitable in a money point of view. By all means write, if you find solace in verse, but do not be in a hurry to publish. Poetry should be the flower and fruit of a man's life, in whatever stage of it, to be a worthy offering to the world."

# CHAPTER XIV.

## VOYAGE ON THE "PEMBROKE CASTLE," SEPT. 1883. TALK ON POETS AND POETRY.

The following is taken from my journal kept on the voyage:

My father and I met the Gladstones at Chester. Thence to Barrow we had a triumphal progress, crowds shouting "Gladstone" at every station. At Barrow we embarked on a tug for the "Pembroke Castle," and left our native land in a tumult of acclaim! Thousands of people lining the shore, and cheering for "Gladstone" and "Tennyson."

The first evening, Sept. 8th, we anchored off the Isle of Man. Gladstone and my father talked of the fact that in England poets and literary men were less known by face to the people than actors and orators. Gladstone advanced the theory that writers being supposed by the public to live in strict seclusion, the public deemed it useless to learn their faces by photographs, since the said public would never see them. Someone noted in the course of the conversation that the photographs of preachers were said by a photographer to sell better than those of any other literary men.

They then discussed the allocution of the Archbishop at the coronation of Edward III. which had been based on the old proverb *Vox populi, vox Dei.* The Tudors, according to Gladstone, soon stamped out this ancient English feeling.

The next morning the two at breakfast were deploring Arthur Hallam, and saying what a noble intellect he had, and, as a student, how great a loss he had been to Dante scholarship.

We steamed past the Ailsa Crag up the coast, and arrived at Islay in the evening.

During the day Sir Arthur Gordon (now Lord Stanmore) was closely questioned by my father as to what he thought Nirwana was. "I understand," said my father, "that the Buddhists hold their end to be a negation of the known, which equals, according to them, a positive apprehension of the unknown." Sir Arthur said that Nirwana was undoubtedly a quenching of all human passion, and that a Buddhist on being asked what Nirwana was, after pondering some time, answered, "I cannot explain, Nirwana is Nirwana." My father suggested as an illustration that "The soul is like a cork in a bucket of water rising through the different strata, until at last it reaches the top and is at rest."

From Oban we went to Loch Hourn. Gladstone and my father conversed on Homer, both admiring Worsley's translation of the *Odyssey*. My father wanted "a translation of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* into Biblical prose." Gladstone said that he fully approved of young men taking up the translation of Homer. "It was like warriors storming the walls of a city; all the warriors were slain, but perhaps some day the city might be taken."

Sir William Harcourt met us at Ardnamurchan Point, and accompanied us to Tobermory. We were talking about tobacco, and my father said that his morning pipe after breakfast was the best in the day. Sir William interposed (laughing at his own burlesque), "The earliest pipe of half-awakened birds."

At Tobermory we took on board Sir Andrew and Lady Clark and Miss Clark. In the evening the Gladstones and Miss Laura Tennant ("the little witch" as my father nicknamed her) begged him to read "The Promise of May." Gladstone expressed his admiration of the play, and his opinion that the row on the first night of the play was "because it was above the comprehension of the vast mass of the people present."

From Tobermory we steamed past the grand headlands of Skye to Gairloch. We landed, and drove to Loch Maree—between ferny, heathery hills, covered with gray crags, very wild,—by the side of a rushing burn. The loch is about eighteen miles long, with rich pine-grown islands scattered here and there, and wooded hills, on either hand, sloping up to a grand fellow, Ben Slioch. Gladstone and my father thought the whole landscape one of the most beautiful they had ever seen.

We returned on board, and rounded Cape Wrath. Sir Arthur Gordon's Fijian servant amused us this afternoon by striking fire with two bits of stick.

On arriving at Kirkwall at ten in the morning of Sept. 13th, the "Pembroke Castle" was boarded by a deputation of the Town Council and Magistrates, who wished Gladstone and my father to accept the freedom of the Burgh. Their petition being granted, we rowed ashore, walked up through a narrow winding street, gay at intervals with Orkney and Shetland wool-shops, to the Cathedral of St Magnus. Gladstone and my father admired the noble simplicity of the church and its massive stone pillars, but we all shuddered at the liberal whitewash and the high pews. From the Cathedral we went to the Bishop's palace, and the banqueting hall (described in *The Pirate*). We had a drive of ten miles to Maeshowe, a Pict burial-mound, and lunched there. We then returned to Kirkwall, and drove to the United Presbyterian Church. The freedom of the Burgh was conferred. There were throngs of people and children, all enthusiastic, very stalwart, and independent-mannered.

My father said to me: "I am never the least shy before great men. Each of them has a personality for which he or she is responsible: but before a crowd, which consists of many personalities, of which I know nothing, I am infinitely shy. The great orator cares nothing about all this. I think of the good man, and the bad man, and the mad man, that may be among them, and can say nothing. *He* takes them all as one man. *He* sways them as one man."

So Gladstone spoke for himself and for my father in acknowledgment of the honour done to them, and ended his speech as follows:

"Mr Tennyson's life and labours correspond in point of time as nearly as possible to my own, but Mr Tennyson's exertions have been on a higher plane of human action than my own. He has worked in a higher field, and his work will be more durable. We public men—who play a part which places us much in view of our countrymen—we are subject to the danger of being momentarily intoxicated by the kindness, the undue homage of kindness, we may receive. It is our business to speak, but the words which we speak have wings, and fly away and disappear. The work of Mr Tennyson is of a higher order.

I anticipate for him the immortality, for which England and Scotland have supplied in the course of their long national life many claims. Your record to-day of the additions which have been made to your municipal body may happen to be examined in distant times, and some may ask, with regard to the Prime Minister, 'Who was he, and what did he do? We know nothing about him.' But the Poet Laureate has written his own song on the hearts of his countrymen, that can never die. Time is powerless against him, and I believe this, that were the period of the inquiry to be so long distant as between this day and the time when Maeshowe was built, still in regard to the Poet Laureate of to-day there would be no difficulty in stating who he was, and what he had done to raise the intellects and hearts of his fellow-creatures to a higher level, and by so doing acquire a deathless fame. It is an unmixed pleasure, on behalf of Mr Tennyson and myself, to acknowledge the great kindness we have received. For any services rendered to the country, on this and on many other occasions, in a thousand other places, I have been received with a tribute far beyond anything I could by any possibility deserve."

It seemed to me that, in the conversations between my father and Gladstone, my father was logical and brilliant in his talk, made his points clearly, and every word and phrase of his, as in his poems and plays, bore directly on the subject under discussion; that Gladstone took longer to go from point to point, and wrapt up his argument in analogies which he thoroughly thrashed out before he returned to his thesis. What struck me most in Gladstone's expression of his thoughts was his eagerness, and mastery of words, coupled with a self-control and a gentle persuasiveness; and a certain persistence in dwelling on those topics which he had himself started for discussion. Yet, like my father, he was always most anxious to learn from anyone whom he thought better informed than himself on the matter in hand. He made some remarkable statements, such as that "No man since Æschylus could have written *The Bride of Lammermoor*."

Both men were as jovial together as boys out for a holiday; but they took good care to keep off the quagmire of politics.

A dense fog came upon us in the middle of the North Sea, and our fog-horn blew all one morning. The lane of moon-lit

sea behind us, as we rushed along at night, seemed to my father "Like a glorious river rushing to the city of God."

After a calm voyage we reached Christiansand. The entrance to the fiord is very rocky. The Norwegians my father thought "English-looking"; and the town was clean. From Christiansand we drove through wooded walls, like the Trossachs, by the side of the river Torreschal to see a cataract. Our ponies trotted along well, and we passed many one-seated curricles.

Gladstone said, "The Norwegians are a happy, unambitious people." They seemed, by what they said to us, to be fond of the English. As we left the quay they cheered with a shrill sharp cheer, like the old English war-cry at the battle of Senlac, "Harou! Harou!"

When again on board, my father was interested by a story which Captain —— told as having happened "when his ship conveyed the Rifles to the Crimea." In the hold they found a French girl hiding: "Je cherche mon amant," she said. They took her as far as Constantinople, and then turned her out of their ship, as they were bound by law to do. But there was a collection made among the men to enable her to go on to the Crimea, which she eventually reached, found her lover, and married him.

We had a fine voyage from Christiansand to Copenhagen, and my father was continually leaning over the bulwarks, and watching the "rainbow hang on the poising wave."

We passed between Denmark and Sweden, and saw the Castle of Elsinore, but Elsinore is by no means a "wild and stormy steep," but a very flat shore. As we drew into Copenhagen the sailors on board the colliers cheered, and it was almost dark when we got into harbour. In the evening we sallied forth to the illuminated gardens of Tivoli, where the old moat with trees on either side glittered in the light of thousands of coloured lamps, festooned among the bushes and the summer-houses. On Monday morning we visited the Thorwaldsen Museum. The Apostles and the Hebe my father recognized and admired, and he liked the statue of the dancing girl. The canal through the town looked picturesque with its yellow-sailed boats and the red-tiled roofs on its banks; the fishermen with their blue aprons standing in groups along the streets, or marketing. We walked to the Rosenberg Palace, and Gladstone and my father

were presented with gorgeous bouquets of violets and red roses by Mrs Harris, the wife of the consul.

An invitation from the king came to us for dinner at the Castle of Fredensborg, far out into the country. Mr and Mrs and Miss Gladstone, Sir Arthur Gordon, Sir Donald Currie and I went. The palace is like an old-fashioned English country house, and we were charmed with the freedom and unconventionality of the large family party.

We sat down, about eighty, to dinner at a horse-shoe table. The King and Queen of Denmark, the Princess of Wales, the Czar and Czarina, the King and Queen of Greece, the Princess Mary of Hanover, the Duchess of Cumberland, and many other notabilities were present.

Next day, Sept. 18th, we visited the Scandinavian Museum, and saw in their oak coffins, buried three thousand years ago, human bodies which had been dug up out of the peat-bogs in Jutland, wrapt in fur cloaks with hair on the skulls. There were besides old horn trumpets, flint-sickles and spear-heads, and a third century kind of Boadicea chariot with scythes on the wheels.

In response to an invitation from the hospitable Sir Donald the Royalties came to luncheon on board, amid salvoes of artillery; three royal ensigns at the bows of the boats.

Danish Admirals, and different Ministers and Diplomatists and Consuls were present to meet the royal visitors.

Gladstone proposed the health of the King of Denmark, the point of his speech being that we English and Danes had sprung from common ancestors. The Czar proposed the health of our Queen; and the King of Denmark that of Mr and Mrs Gladstone. Then the Queen of Denmark rose and drank to my father. The Czarina said to him, "What a kind and sympathetic man Mr Gladstone is! how he stood by little Montenegro!" Everybody was most friendly and everything went without a hitch.

In the small smoking-room after luncheon my father, at the request of the Princess of Wales, read "The Bugle Song" and "The Grandmother." The Czarina paid him some very pretty compliment, and he, being very short-sighted, and taking her for a Maid of Honour, patted her on the shoulder and said, "Thank you, my dear."

The Czar observed to my father, "I should like to be King of Denmark!" and in his talk he seemed full of love for the Danes, who are a simple people.

There was a roar of cannon when the King and Queen left: and at four o'clock we steamed out of harbour, the sailors cheering from all the battle-ships of England, France, Russia and Denmark, and the Russian band on board the Russian man-of-war, playing "God save the Queen."

We arrived at the Nore about 7 p.m. next day, and the morning after landed at Gravesend. The last evening my father and Gladstone had a long talk about the clergyman-poets of England, and about poetry in general. Mr Gladstone noted, what I have before touched on, my father's promptitude in praising anything in which he saw merit, written by writers however obscure[1].

It may not be out of place if I give here some of my father's criticisms on poets,—"who," as he said, "enrich the blood of the world,"—in addition to those already quoted. I put down a few random notes of his sayings at this time and at other times on the subject.

Chaucer was to him a kindred spirit, as a lover of nature and as a word-painter of character: and he enjoyed reading him aloud more than any poet except Shakespeare and Milton.

When he talked of the "grand style" of poetic diction he would emphasize his opinion that he considered that of Milton even finer than that of Virgil, "the lord of language." "Verse should be *beau comme la prose.*"

[1] To one of these talks Mr Gladstone has referred in the *New Review* July, 1896: "The next of my sub-classes is that of persons who may be said to have deserved fame without obtaining it, or obtaining even for the moment either fame, or anything which resembled it. My readings in poetry led me to hold this belief so strongly that very long ago I resolved on testing it by a reference to Lord Tennyson, who at once gave it the stamp of his authority—an authority which I take to be quite conclusive, for he was one who would be at once a candid and a strict or even fastidious judge. He was strongly of opinion that a number of poems of real merit had been published during the period I am dealing with, of which the public had taken no notice whatever; which were in effect still-born. It would be invidious to mention names, though some are in my recollection: and in truth they would convey no information. But I may refer to the case of the late Lord de Tabley," etc.

"Browning," he said, "never greatly cares about the glory of words or beauty of form: he has told me that the world must take him as it finds him. As for his obscurity in his great imaginative analyses, I believe it is a mistake to explain poetry too much, people have really a pleasure in discovering their own interpretations. He has a mighty intellect, but sometimes I cannot read him. He seldom attempts the marriage of sense with sound, although he shows a spontaneous felicity in the adaptation of words to ideas and feelings. I wish I had written his two lines:

'The little more and how much it is,
The little less and what worlds away.'

He has plenty of music in him, but he cannot get it out."

He would cite "Rabbi Ben Ezra," "Death in the Desert," "Caliban upon Setebos," "The Englishman in Italy," and "A Grammarian's Funeral," as poems of fine thought, and "Mr Sludge, the Medium" as an example of exceeding ingenuity of mind. The last, however, he said to Browning, is "two-thirds too long."

Among modern sonnets he liked some of Rossetti's, Mrs Browning's "Sonnets from the Portuguese," and Charles Turner's. For Christina Rossetti, as a true artist, he expressed profound respect.

Of Shelley he said: "He is often too much in the clouds for me. I admire his 'Alastor,' 'Adonais,' 'Prometheus Unbound,' and 'Epipsychidion,' and some of his short lyrics are exquisite. As for 'The Lover's Tale,' that was written before I had ever seen a Shelley, though it is called Shelleyan[1]."

Of Swinburne: "He is a reed through which all things blow into music."

[1] For his admiration of Shelley's blank verse see p. 70.

He was not a great reader of William Morris; but he liked *The Life and Death of Jason.*

Keats he placed on a lofty pinnacle. "He would have been among the very greatest of us if he had lived. There is something of the innermost soul of poetry in almost everything he ever wrote." He gave the unfinished "Eve of St Mark," and the following lines from the "Ode to a Nightingale" in illustration:

> "Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
> Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
> She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
> The same that oft-times hath
> Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
> Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn."

"If the beginning of 'Hyperion,' as now published, were shorter," he said, "it would be a deal finer: that is, if from 'Not so much' to 'feathered grass' were omitted."

He felt what Cowper calls the "musical finesse" of Pope, and admired single lines and couplets very much; but he found the "regular da da, da da" of his heroic metre monotonous. He quoted

"What dire offence from amorous causes springs."

"'Amrus causiz springs,' horrible! I would sooner die than write such a line!! Archbishop Trench (not then archbishop) was the only critic who said of my first volume, 'What a singular absence of the 's'!'

"Pope here and there has a real insight into Nature, for example about the spider, which

'Feels at each thread and lives along the line.'

His lancet touches are very fine.

'Now night descending, the proud scene was o'er
But lived in Settle's numbers one day more.'

"What a difference," he would add, "between Pope's little poisonous barbs, and Dryden's strong invective! And how much more real poetic force there is in Dryden!

Look at Pope:

'He said, observant of the blue-eyed maid,
Then in the sheath return'd the shining blade':

Then at Dryden:

'He said; with surly faith observed her word,
And in the sheath reluctant plunged the sword.'

The 'Elegy on the Unfortunate Lady' is good, but I do not find much human feeling in him, except perhaps in 'Eloisa to Abelard.'"

He liked Crabbe much, and thought that there was great force in his homely tragic stories. "He has a world of his own. There is a 'tramp, tramp, tramp,' a merciless sledge-hammer thud about his lines which suits his subjects." And in speaking of him he would cite Byron's

"Nature's sternest painter yet the best."

In early boyhood he had been possessed by Byron's poetry, but he could not read it in later life, except perhaps "The Vision of Judgment," and parts of "Childe Harold," and of "Don Juan." He would say: "Byron is not an artist or a thinker, or a creator in the higher sense, but a strong personality: he is endlessly clever, and is now unduly depreciated[1]."

"One must distinguish," he would add, "Keats, Shelley, and Byron from the great sage poets of all, who are both great thinkers and great artists, like Æschylus, Shakespeare, Dante, and Goethe. Goethe

[1] See Vol. I. p. 141.

lacked the divine intensity of Dante, but he was among the wisest of mankind as well as a great artist. He could not quite overcome the harshnesses of the German language. 'Kennst du das Land?' is a perfect poem, but 'Beschützer ziehn' is a hideous sound in the middle. Goethe was supposed to be cold. I can only say that when told of his son's death he seemed quite calm, but shortly afterwards from repressed emotion he broke a blood-vessel."

"Goethe thought it a sign of weakness to lose faith in Immortality, and said, 'I hope that I shall never be so weak-minded as to let my belief in a future life be torn from me.' 'Edel sei der Mensch' is one of the noblest of all poems."

He had a hearty admiration for Wordsworth, the purity and nobility of whose teaching he highly reverenced. "He seems to me," my father would say, "at his best on the whole the greatest English poet since Milton. He is often too diffuse and didactic for me: for instance, in 'Tintern Abbey' the repetition of 'that blessed mood, that serene and blessed mood' becomes ridiculous. The line

'Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns'

is almost the grandest in the English language, giving the sense of the abiding in the transient."

Of Gray he said, "Gray in his limited sphere is great, and has a wonderful ear." The following he held to be "among the most liquid lines in any language":

"Though he inherit
Nor the pride, nor ample pinion
That the Theban eagle bear,
Sailing with supreme dominion
Through the azure deep of air."

Also:

"And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds."

He liked Collins' and Campbell's *Odes*. "I admire the 'Ode to Evening,'" he said, "but what a bad, hissing line is that in the poem on the death of Thomson,

'The year's best sweets shall duteous rise.'"

"Campbell's unquantitative line

'The sentinel stars set their watch in the sky'

is as bad as the following line is good:

'The weary to sleep and the wounded to die.'"

Of Shakespeare's sonnets he would say, "Henry Hallam made a great mistake about them: they are noble. Look how beautiful such lines as these are:

'The summer flower is to the summer sweet,
Though to itself it only live and die,'

and

'And peace proclaims olives of endless age.'"

Of Shakespeare's blank verse he said, "Almost any prose can be cut up into blank verse, but blank verse becomes the finest vehicle of thought in the language of Shakespeare and Milton. As far as I am aware, no one has noticed what great Æschylean lines there are in Shakespeare, particularly in *King John:* for instance,

'The burning crest
Of the old, feeble, and day-wearied sun,'

or again,

'The sepulchre
Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws.'"

He would say, "There are three repartees in Shakespeare which always bring tears to my eyes from their simplicity.

One is in *King Lear* when Lear says to Cordelia, 'So young and so untender,' and Cordelia lovingly answers, 'So young, my lord, and true.' And in *The Winter's Tale*, when Florizel takes Perdita's hand to lead her to the dance, and says, 'So turtles pair that never mean to part,' and the little Perdita answers, giving her hand to Florizel, 'I'll swear for 'em.' And in *Cymbeline*, when Imogen in tender rebuke says to her husband,

'Why did you throw your wedded lady from you?
Think that you are upon a rock; and now
Throw me again!'

and Posthumus does not ask forgiveness, but answers, kissing her,

'Hang there like fruit, my soul,
Till the tree die.'"

After reading *Pericles*, Act v. aloud:

"That is glorious Shakespeare: most of the rest of the play is poor, and not by Shakespeare, but in that act the conception of Marina's character is exquisite."

Of *Henry VI.* he said, "I am certain that *Henry VI.* is in the main not Shakespeare's, though here and there he may have put in a touch, as he undoubtedly did in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. There is a great deal of fine Shakespeare in that. Spedding insisted that Shakespeare, among the many plays that he edited for the stage, had corrected a play on Sir Thomas More in the British Museum. It is a poor play, but Spedding believed that the corrections were possibly in Shakespeare's actual handwriting."

"I have no doubt that much of *Henry VIII.* also is not Shakespeare. It is largely written by Fletcher, with passages unmistakeably by Shakespeare, notably the two first scenes in the first Act, which are sane and compact in thought, expression and simile. I could swear to Shakespeare in the *Field of the Cloth of Gold:*

'To-day the French
All clinquant, all in gold like heathen gods,
Shone down the English; and to-morrow they
*Made Britain India; every man that stood*
*Show'd like a mine.*'"

"*Hamlet* is the greatest creation in literature that I know of: though there may be elsewhere finer scenes and passages of poetry. Ugolino and Paolo and Francesca in Dante equal anything anywhere. It is said that Shakespeare was such a poor actor that he never got beyond his ghost in this play, but then the ghost is the most real ghost that ever was. The Queen did not think that Ophelia committed suicide, neither do I."

"Is there a more delightful love-poem than *Romeo and Juliet*? yet it is full of conceits.

"One of the most passionate things in Shakespeare is Romeo's speech:

'Amen, amen! but come what sorrow can,
It cannot countervail the exchange of joy
That one short minute gives me in her sight,' etc.

More passionate than anything in Shelley. No one has drawn the true passion of love like Shakespeare."

For inimitably natural talk between husband and wife he would quote the scene between Hotspur and Lady Percy (*King Henry IV.*, Pt. I.), and would exclaim: "How deliciously playful is that—

'In faith, I'll break thy little finger, Harry,
An if thou wilt not tell me all things true'!"

"Macbeth is not, as is too often represented, a noisy swash-buckler; he is a full-furnished, ambitious man. In the scene with Duncan, the excess of courtesy adds a touch to the tragedy. It is like Clytemnestra's profusion to Agamemnon; who, by the way, always strikes me as uncommonly cold and haughty to his wife whom he had not seen for years."

"*King Lear* cannot possibly be acted, it is too titanic. At the beginning of the play Lear, in his old age, has grown half mad, choleric and despotic, and therefore cannot brook Cordelia's silence. This play shows a state of society where men's passions are savage and uncurbed. No play like this anywhere—not even the *Agamemnon*—is so terrifically human."

"Actors do not comprehend that Shakespeare's greatest villains, Iago among them, have always a touch of conscience. You see the conscience working—therein lies one of Shakespeare's pre-eminences. Iago ought to be acted as the 'honest Iago,' not the stage villain; he is the essentially jealous man, not Othello."

Parts of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* he considered were by Shakespeare. "For instance such lines as these bear his impress:

'That makes the stream seem flowers,'

and

'Who dost pluck
With hand armipotent from forth blue clouds
The mason'd turrets: that both mak'st and break'st
The stony girths of cities.'"

Of Marlowe too he was very fond, and would often quote Ford's *Broken Heart.*

On American poets: "I know several striking poems by American poets, but I think that Edgar Poe is (taking his poetry and prose together) the most original

American genius." When asked to write an epitaph of one line for Poe's monument in Westminster Churchyard, Baltimore, he answered: "How can so strange and so fine a genius, and so sad a life, be exprest and comprest in one line?"

He said of writing poetry: "Simple poems with simple thoughts and in simple language are most difficult to write. I might say that in blank verse 'The easiest things are hardest to be done': and the converse is often true with me, 'The hardest things are easiest to be done.' I feared for years to touch the subject of the 'Holy Grail,' and when I began finished it in a fortnight."

# CHAPTER XV.

## PEERAGE. EXTENSION OF THE FRANCHISE.

## 1883–84.

After our voyage in the *Pembroke Castle* my father was in great spirits, and wrote to the Queen of Denmark:

As soon as I came home I gave orders to my publishers to bind the books which your Majesty and others of your family had desired me to send them.

They have taken nearly five weeks to do so. I sent them off yesterday to your Majesty, and I trust they will reach you in a day or two.

Allow me to say how much I, old man in my 75th year, was charmed by the kindliness and true-heartedness of your royal Danish children, and believe me, I can't say loyally, for your Majesty is not my Queen, yes, at any rate loyally in the old knightly way—

A. TENNYSON.

In the spring of 1882 my father had first met Mary Boyle who was a guest at "The Briary," Mr G. F. Watts' house at Freshwater, then occupied by Lord and Lady Kenmare. Her gentle voice and manner, her sympathetic nature, her conversational powers, and playful wit, made her from time to time henceforward a welcome guest in our homes as she was in so many others.

To her he wrote:

"I have just returned from my cruise with Gladstone. There were many pleasant people on board, but I found myself often wishing that you and Audrey were among them.

I verily believe that the better heart of me beats stronger at 74 than ever it did at 18."

It was during one of Mary Boyle's first visits to Farringford with her niece Audrey that Phillips Brooks (afterwards Bishop) came to see us. The more my father saw of him in future years the more he reverenced his cheerful Christianity, his hard work in the cause of truth, and his common-sense criticism of men and public affairs. Nor less high was the regard returned by the Bishop.

Bishop Brooks' journal supplies a notice of this visit:

FARRINGFORD.

I came down here yesterday, a long three hours' run from London, through a very pretty country, passing Winchester cathedral and other attractive things upon the way. At last we crossed the Channel in a little cockleshell of a steamboat, and landed at Yarmouth, where Hallam Tennyson was waiting for me with the carriage. Then a pretty drive over the Downs, with two or three small villages upon the way, brought us, in about three miles, to this house. Here the great poet lives. He is finer than his pictures, a man of good six feet and over, but stooping as he walks, for he is seventy-four years old, and we shall stoop if we ever live to that age. A big dome of a head, bald on the forehead and the top, and very fine to look at. A deep bright eye, a grand eagle nose, a mouth which you cannot see, a black felt hat, and a loose tweed suit. These were what I noticed in the author of "In Memoriam."

The house is a delightful old rambling thing, whose geography one never learns, not elegant but very comfortable, covered with pictures inside and ivies outside, with superb ilexes and other

trees about it, and lovely pieces of view over the Channel here and there.

He was just as good as he could be, and we all went to a place behind the house, where the trees leave a large circle, with beautiful grass, and tables and chairs scattered about. Here we sat down and talked. Tennyson was inclined to be misanthropic, talked about Socialism, Atheism, and another great catastrophe like the French Revolution coming on the world. He declared that if he were a Yankee he would be ashamed to keep the Alabama money, but he let himself be contradicted about his gloomy views, and by and by became more cheerful. We had tea out of doors, took a walk for various views, then, having come to know me pretty well, he wanted to know if I smoked, and we went up to the study, a big, bright, crowded room, where he writes his Idylls, and there we stayed till dinner-time.

Dinner was very lively. Mrs Tennyson is a dear old lady, a great invalid, as sweet and pathetic as a picture. Then there are staying here Mr Lushington, a great Greek scholar, a Miss B., who knows everybody and tells funny stories, and another Miss B., her pretty niece, with the loveliest smile. After dinner, Tennyson and I went up to the study again, and I had him to myself for two or three hours. We smoked, and he talked of metaphysics, and poetry, and religion, his own life, and Hallam, and all the poems. It was very delightful, for he was gentle, and reverent, and tender, and hopeful. Then we went down to the drawing-room where the rest were, and he read his poetry to us till the clock said twelve—"Locksley Hall," "Sir Galahad," pieces of "Maud" (which he specially likes to read), and some of his dialect poems. He said, by the way, in reading "Locksley Hall," that the verse beginning

Love took up, etc.

was the best simile he ever made; and that and a certain line in "The Gardener's Daughter" were the ones on which he most piqued himself[1]. Just after midnight we came to bed. They

[1] For effects of sound he instanced

The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm,

from "The Gardener's Daughter," and

By the long wash of Australasian seas,

from "The Brook." "I should like to hear," he added, "from afar the deep roar of the Pacific."

had the prettiest way at dinner of getting up before the fruit came and going into the drawing-room, where there was a fresh table spread by the window looking out on the lawn and Channel.

In November of this year Sir Edward Hamley and Mr Locker-Lampson visited us at Aldworth. Sir Edward Hamley and my father discussed the incidents of the charge of the Heavy Brigade, and my father's poem on the subject, published in *Macmillan's Magazine*, March, 1882.

During the afternoon we walked through the grounds and woods. Sir Edward stayed till evening, when he rose to take leave. My father asked him to stay the night: adding, "There are three ladies here who wish it," meaning my mother and two guests in the house. Sir Edward answered that there were three other ladies who opposed it. "Who are they?" said my father. "The Fates," Sir Edward replied. Whereupon my father rejoined, "The Fates may be on one side, but the Graces are on the other."

The lines, addressed to Sir Edward Hamley, as a prologue to "The Charge of the Heavy Brigade," describe the visit, and the autumnal view from Aldworth.

Our birches yellowing, and from each
  The light leaf falling fast,
While squirrels from our fiery beech
  Were bearing off the mast,
You came, and look'd, and loved the view,
  Long known and loved by me,
Green Sussex fading into blue
  With one gray glimpse of sea.

My father had many interesting conversations with Lord Wolseley, who is alluded to in this prologue, both in London and at Aldworth. I need hardly remark how

much of a soldier at heart the poet was who had written "The Charge of the Light Brigade," "The Defence of Lucknow," and the "Ode on the death of the Duke of Wellington," or what true, admiring sympathy he felt always for the self-sacrificing lives to which those who command and serve in our army are often called. He would proudly remember he had been taken three times into battle. He said that one soldier wrote: "I escaped with my life and my Tennyson."

With reference to "The Charge of the Heavy Brigade," Kinglake forwarded a letter from Colonel A. Elliot[1], who had been there with Scarlett:

Of course I am proud to be mentioned again in connexion with that ride into the Russian column, and to be associated with the memory of my dear old chief. It is an honour in every sense. I read the ballad (or poem?) with a renewal of that blood-rising which I recognized on the day when we wheeled into line, and started to meet the big foe above us on that hill-side, now twenty-eight years ago, for the sketch is very graphic, and fine, and worthy of the Laureate.

This autumn a Peerage was offered by the Queen to my father. The part of my journal relating to the offer may be inserted here:

"Mr Gladstone caught sight of me reading by the bulwarks of the *Pembroke Castle* one day, and beckoned me to walk with him. He said literature was one of the noblest callings he knew, that he honoured my father greatly, and that for the sake of literature he would like to offer him a distinction from the Queen, about which he had been corresponding with Lord Granville—a barony. 'Do you think that your father would accept it?' I replied that the offer was so startling that I did not know how he would take it, but I thought that he might

[1] He was one of the

Three that were next in their fiery course.

accept it for the sake of literature (remembering how various literary men had cried 'shame upon him' when he did not take the baronetcy offered three successive times). The only difficulty in Gladstone's mind was that my father might insist on wearing his wide-awake in the House of Lords. He begged me to lay the matter before my father. I answered that he had better let me take my time, as the offer would fluster him and mar his enjoyment of the voyage, since he never thought about or cared for titles. He said, 'Very well, let me know when I may speak to him.'

Next day (Wednesday) I let go by without breathing a word. I spoke to Mrs Gladstone and told her I was not anxious that he should accept the honour, but that I knew he would be touched by the feeling of delicacy shown by Mr Gladstone, and by the friendship that prompted what he had said.

On Thursday Sir Arthur Gordon asked me whether I had spoken to my father about the barony, as Gladstone was growing anxious to have the answer, and wished to write definitely to the Queen.

I then told my father of the plot against him as he was smoking, and left him to ruminate. When I returned, I found Mr Gladstone and my father deep in Homer, discussing the beauty of the similes. I said to Mr Gladstone, 'I have spoken.' 'I may speak then,' he said, and proceeded to urge the peerage.

He said that a baronetcy was not the same honour as in Sir Walter Scott's day, that he had always thought a baronetcy an inadequate honour for my father, and then he cited Grote as being offered a peerage, on purely literary grounds, which he had refused for good reasons. As for my father's politics, he assured him that he believed that his (Laureate) political poems were among the wisest of political utterances.

My father shook his head and said that he felt nervous about it, and did not want to alter his plain Mr., that the peerage might have been a good to him twenty years ago, when he could have spoken in the House of Lords.

I could not find out what my father's mind was, as he had many 'cons' and very few 'pros.' I then asked Sir Arthur Gordon to help me. He returned perplexed. So I appealed to Algernon West, as Mr Gladstone said that he wanted to communicate with the Queen. West came from my father after

some time, saying that my father had consented to Gladstone's writing to Her Majesty, and that he was going to Gladstone, but I begged him not to do so: 'Don't say anything until my father expresses his views more clearly.' After dinner I discussed the question with my father, and he said, 'By Gladstone's advice I have consented to take the peerage, but for my own part I shall regret my simple name all my life.'"

I may here give two letters from my father to Mr Gladstone after he had accepted the Peerage.

ALDWORTH, 1883.

MY DEAR GLADSTONE,

I cannot but be touched by the friendliness of your desire that this mark of distinction should be conferred on myself, and I rejoice that you, who have shown such true devotion to literature, by pursuing it in the midst of what seems to most of us overwhelming and all-absorbing business, should be the first *thus* publicly to proclaim the position which literature ought to hold in the world's work.

Faithfully and affectionately yours,

A. TENNYSON.

P. S. I have totally forgotten what passage in Dante we were discussing on board the P. C. I have written my thanks to the Queen.

*December*, 1883.

MY DEAR GLADSTONE,

...Her Majesty must decide as to when I am to be Peered. The younger branch of my father's family, who succeeded to the fortune, took the name of Tennyson d'Eyncourt. Would that do? They say they are descended from the old branch of the d'Eyncourts who came in with William, and from the later creation of the

same name in tempore Charles II. If they, then I. It is a small matter, I will let you know later on. Many thanks for your congratulations on Hallam's engagement. I trust that Mrs Gladstone, to whom my best and kindest remembrances, is better.

Yours ever, A. TENNYSON.

P. S. I heard of an old lady the other day to whom all the great men of her time had written. When Froude's *Carlyle* came out, she rushed up to her room, and to an old chest there wherein she kept their letters, and flung them into the fire. "They were written to me," she said, "not to the public!" and she set her chimney on fire, and her children and grandchildren ran in—"The chimney's on fire!" "Never mind!" she said, and went on burning. I should like to raise an altar to that old lady, and burn incense upon it.

*From the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone to Hallam Tennyson.*

*Dec. 27th*, 1883.

I am very glad to learn that the title is fairly launched and the apotheosis accomplished. I think that by it we certainly succeed in decorating the House of Lords, and I think your father will also be pleased with having given, as I believe, some real pleasure to the Queen in the grant of this honour. Thank him very much for having sent me Mr Seeley's book[1]. Although I think a Professor gets upon rather slippery ground when he undertakes to deal with politics more practical than historical or scientific, yet it is certainly most desirable that English folk should consider well their position, present and prospective, in the world. It is fearful in moral responsibility but magnificent

[1] *The Expansion of England.*

in strength, in security, in magnitude and in moral capabilities. Have you heard of the pamphlet of Mr Zincke who shows, by fair probable argument, that the English-speaking peoples of the world are likely in 1983 to be a thousand millions? At some time or other, but at the proper time and if it is allowable, I want to ask for a copy of the "Promise of May"; there is so much delightful dialogue that I wish not to be without record in my mind.

All best wishes of Xmas and New Year to you all.

My father wrote to another friend: "Why should I be selfish and not suffer an honour (as Gladstone says) to be done to literature in my name? For myself I felt, especially in the dark days that may be coming on, that a peerage might possibly be more of a disadvantage than an advantage to my sons: I cannot tell. I have been worried because, being of a nervous, sensitive nature, I wished as soon as possible to get over the disagreeable results, and the newspaper comments and abuse." Nevertheless he felt grateful to the Queen who desired that he should belong to what he regarded as "the greatest Upper Chamber[1] in the world," and have a voice among many men of mark and among the descendants of those who had made England what she is. He looked upon the House of Lords as foremost

[1] I suppose that this was repeated, for it was said that he approved of the English constitution for all countries. On the contrary I have heard him often say: "This English constitution would never do for every sort and condition of country. The fault of the Englishman is, that he thinks that he and his ways are always right everywhere." He was of opinion that the hereditary principle in the House of Lords might be further qualified by life-peerages (to be given more especially to the most remarkable representatives of Art, Science and Literature, and to the heads of the great professions and industries), although our Upper House, as now constituted, has shown that it possesses the political common-sense to compromise whenever democratic passions are likely to be excited. In 1885 Maine's *Popular Government* was published, and he would advise his friends to read this as an exposition of the views of moderate men in England.

in debating power, a stable, wise, and moderating influence in these changeful democratic days.

He said indeed, "Since we have no American referendum (with a two-thirds majority necessary before any constitutional change is undertaken), what safeguard is there against the destruction of the Constitution and the disruption of the whole Empire, except a chamber like the House of Lords?"

On March 11th, 1884, my father was staying at the Deanery, and took his seat.

The Duke of Argyll and Lord Kenmare introduced him,—the latter in place of his old college friend Lord Houghton, who was unable to be present. Lord Selborne as Chancellor received him.

He sat on the cross benches, for, as he told Mr Gladstone, he could not pledge himself to Party, which he considered was made "too much of a god in these days." He felt that he must be free to vote for that which seemed to him best for the Empire.

He voted for Extension of the Franchise in July, not that he deemed the time altogether ripe for such a measure, on the contrary. But the promises of statesmen and agitators had so deeply stirred the popular mind, that delay, he thought, was no longer safe.

"Perhaps," he said, "it is the first step on the road to the new social condition that is surely coming on the world. Evolution has often come through revolution. In England common-sense has carried the day without great upheavals, and I believe that English common-sense will save us still if our statesmen be not idiotic.

If there is a revolution it will be world-wide, the mightiest ever known.

May I not live to see it."

Among many messages of congratulation, a poor old blind servant of his mother's, Susan Epton, sent to congratulate him. He wrote: "I have received many

letters of congratulation, some from great lords and ladies, but the affectionate remembrance of good old Susan Epton and her sister touched me more than all these. I am grieved that the former is stone blind. Will you, please, give her my kindest remembrance?"

On March 21st he wrote to an old blind Sheffield blacksmith:

I should have a heart harder than your anvil if I were not deeply interested by what you tell me. I thank you for your pretty verses. The spirit which inspires them should give the lesson of cheerful resignation and thankfulness and faith to all.

Being able to do this by writing such verses you will always have work of the noblest and best to do.

Accept from me my best wishes, and believe me

Truly yours, TENNYSON.

To Monsieur Francisque Michel, who had translated the "Idylls of the King" into French, he wrote:

I have such sheaves of letters, not only from here and there in Great Britain, but America, Australia, India, &c., that I am sometimes, as they say, "at my wit's end" how I am to answer them all; and my son generally answers them for me, for my eyes are failing, and I fear that I may be slowly growing blind; but I cannot resist responding to your kindly letter with my own hand.

I have not forgotten you, nor that pleasant day and night when you were with us, and enlivened us with hundreds of stories and anecdotes. You talked a whole volume. Very agreeable it was and very rememberable.

You will despise my ignorance. I am so little of an antiquarian that, though of course I have heard of John Gower, I don't think I have ever read more of him than a few lines in a chance quotation; and as for Chandos, I am ashamed to tell you that till I read your advertisement I knew not even his name; but I have no doubt that your forthcoming book supplies a want, and will be most interesting.

I thank you for your kind congratulations about the peerage; but being now in my 75th year, and having lost almost all my youthful contemporaries, I see myself, as it were, in an extra page of Holbein's "Dance of Death," and standing before the mouth of an open sepulchre while the Queen hands me a coronet, and the skeleton takes it away, and points me downward into the darkness.

Pardon me, if this sound too tragic.

"Freedom" in *Macmillan's Magazine* for December was his first political utterance as a peer. It carried on the feeling of his old political poems, the same feeling which Bacon had expressed, that "Men in their innovations should follow the example of time itself, which indeed innovateth greatly, but quietly, and by degrees scarce to be perceived."

A correspondence with Mr Gladstone on my father's vote for the Extension of the Franchise follows.

*From the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone to Lionel Tennyson.*

10 DOWNING STREET, *July 3rd*, 1884.

MY DEAR LIONEL TENNYSON,

We should be sorry to make any unnecessary demand on your father, but the motion of Lord Salisbury on Monday raises issues of the utmost importance to the country

and to the Order, and I make no doubt that we may count upon his being in his place on Tuesday for the Division.

Believe me sincerely yours,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

*From Lionel Tennyson to his father.*

Here is a letter from W. E. G. I have simply said that I will write and talk to you on the subject, but that in the meantime I know nothing of your plans. I do not know what you feel about the Franchise, but one thing is certain, that W. E. G. has not the smallest chance of a majority in the House of Lords. Lord Salisbury's motion is, I think, identical with Albert Grey's in the Lower House, viz. that Extension of Franchise should be coincident with redistribution. The Liberal argument in favour of their separation is that Extension of Franchise is a question of principle, and that the chances of carrying a bill on the subject should not be imperilled by the petty and personal interests which would be brought into play by a measure of redistribution. Principle first, detail afterwards. The other side says: As matters stand, the Liberals would derive an undue advantage from the Extension of Franchise; and that they will go to the country with these odds in their favour.

Mr Gladstone at the same time writes to my mother:

.....I was so sorry to miss you at Hallam's marriage[1], and so pleased to receive any message, but it almost provoked me to send you a couple of tracts of mine, published six or eight years ago. This however would be too vindictive. It is most true, as Mr Burke says, that the right to govern lies in wisdom and virtue. It is not less true that irresponsive power is a dangerous thing unless curbed by wisdom, which often finds this curbing difficult.

My father answered:

ALDWORTH, *July*, 1884.

I did not write more fully knowing how overwhelmed you are with business and anxiety, but you have found time to write to me notwithstanding, and I

[1] With Audrey Boyle in Westminster Abbey on June 25th, 1884.

must answer, and you must read my answer or not as you can and will. Here is something of my creed.

The nation is one and includes all ranks of people.

I take for granted that both Houses are equally anxious to do justice to all.

Certainly the House of Peers has the prior claim to confidence, being the older of the two, and it would be a base abdication, if it forewent its right and its duty to reconsider an all-important question.

The Extension of Franchise I hold to be matter of justice; the proper time for bringing forward the question, matter of opinion.

Whether this was the proper time or not—Extension I now hold to be an accomplished fact. But I think that at this time, and at all times, redistribution is necessarily an integral part of a true Franchise Bill.

For instance, whether the towns are to dominate and absorb the country votes, or the country votes to have their due weight, whether loyal North Ireland is to be overridden by disloyal South, seem to me all-important facts in the true representation of the country.

(A Franchise Bill, I take it, is intended to facilitate the choice of those supposed to be best fitted to understand the needs and the claims of the people, and to devise means for satisfying them.)

If you solemnly pledge yourselves that the Extension Bill shall not become law before redistribution has been satisfactorily settled, I am quite willing to vote with you, and in proof I come up to town notwithstanding gout. My wife is very grateful for your letter, but will not of course trouble you with a reply.

Ever yours, TENNYSON.

I am oppressed with gout, and therefore beg you will excuse my employing my daughter-in-law's hand.

My brother then writes:

Gladstone gives a positive pledge that redistribution follows at the earliest opportunity. You may rest assured the Liberal party is pledged to a Redistribution Bill, and further that now resolutions are to be adopted, putting the pledge into definite shape. I saw Gladstone this morning.

My father accordingly went up to London and voted for Lord Wemyss's motion:

"That this House being in possession of full knowledge of all that has passed with reference to the Franchise Bill, the principle of which has already been accepted by this House, is of opinion that it should be proceeded with and considered with a view to its being passed in the present session: and this House is further of opinion that an humble address should be presented to Her Majesty to summon Parliament to assemble in the month of October next for the purpose of considering the Redistribution Bill which Her Majesty's Ministers have undertaken to use their best endeavours to pass so soon as the Franchise Bill has received the royal assent."

On division this was rejected by 182 to 132: Lord Salisbury stating that he could not accept the mere promise of a Redistribution Bill, for though the Government might promise to bring in such a Bill, they did not and could not promise what that Bill would be. On November 13th the Franchise Bill was formally introduced into the House of Lords, and my father wished Mr Gladstone to make the main provisions of a Redistribution Bill the subject of friendly communication with the Conservative opposition, and to bring on the second reading of this Bill simultaneously with the Franchise Bill going into committee. On November 14th he forwarded the following lines to the Prime Minister:

Steersman, be not precipitate in thine act
Of steering, for the river here, my friend,
Parts in two channels, moving to one end—
This goes straight forward to the cataract:
That streams about the bend;

But tho' the cataract seem the nearer way,
Whate'er the crowd on either bank may say,
Take thou the "bend," 'twill save thee many a day.

*From the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone.*

10 DOWNING STREET,
*Nov. 15th*, 1884.

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

I think it a great honour to receive from you a suggestion in verse. For three months I have laboured to the best and utmost of my ability to avert a crisis and an era of organic change, which it seems to me that the Tory benches have been inviting; and I have been quite willing to tread any path, direct or circuitous, which could lead me to the attainment of this end. Indeed I have, as you advised, toiled in the circuitous method; but unfortunately with this issue, that, working round the labyrinth, I find myself at the end where I was at the beginning. However, in any and every way open to us we shall continue to work for peace. "The resources of civilisation are not yet exhausted," and I will not despair, provided our friends, and you among them, continue, as I feel sure it will be, to give us their firm and united support.

Believe me most sincerely yours,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

*To the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone.*

ALDWORTH, HASLEMERE,
*November 16th*, 1884.

MY DEAR GLADSTONE,

It is very good in you to take my lines so kindly. I know nothing of parliamentary party tactics, but I have a strong conviction that the more simple the dealings of men with men as well as of man with man are—the better. Therefore, were I your mentor, I should earnestly advise you and urge upon you that you would do a noble and an English act, if you went straightway to the House and said—"When the Lords have passed the second reading of the Franchise Bill, we

pledge ourselves to lay on the table our Redistribution Bill."

You can scarce expect the Opposition to give you their scheme of a Bill. It is your duty (or so it seems to me) to give *your* scheme.

As your friend, I should then feel it a triumph to vote for you; and I have little doubt that your Bill would be moderate.

Yours ever, TENNYSON.

Mr Gladstone's secretary answered:

*November 17th*, 1884.

Mr Gladstone desires me to express to you his thanks for your letter. He hopes that you may think the declaration which will be made by the Government this afternoon on the Franchise question reasonable and sufficient.

The declaration was in accordance with the hopes my father had expressed in his last letter: and on the 18th Lord Hartington stated that the Government would receive in trust a communication from the Opposition that they would go into consultation on the Redistribution Bill and would not ask for an assurance as to the passing of the Franchise Bill as a preliminary to such a consultation. The Franchise Bill was therefore read a second time without a division[1].

By my father's wish I then wrote to Mr Gladstone:

"My father desires me heartily to congratulate you on the declaration, and on the explanation that you gave in your letter to the leaders of the Opposition. We cannot but feel that all your *real* friends, and all true Englishmen, will rejoice at your magnanimous act."

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"The Cup" and "The Falcon" and "Becket" were published this year; also new editions of the complete works in seven volumes, and in one volume, both carefully revised by my father.

[1] See Irving's *Annals of our Time*.

## CHAPTER XVI.

LETTERS. THE GORDON HOME. "TIRESIAS," WITH NOTES BY MY FATHER.

1885.

Roden Noel's article on the "Idylls" was the subject of much conversation in February, and my father wrote to him as follows:

"Your article in the *Contemporary* has been sent to me * * *. My eyes are very bad. One is entirely gone for all reading purposes, and the other—I hope it will not fail me utterly before I die;—but I have looked into your book, and find it full of true poetry[1]—not concentration enough, perhaps. You are wrong about the 'Idylls of the King,' but wrong in a gracious and noble way, for which I am obliged to you."

To E. V. B., the charming and gifted lady who had illustrated his "May Queen," and whose drawings of children he admired, he sent these lines for her *Ros Rosarum*.

*The Rosebud.*

The night with sudden odour reel'd,
The southern stars a music peal'd,

[1] Two of Roden Noel's lines which he quoted after reading were

"The life of life whene'er we cry
Fills our low springs with personality."

Warm beams across the meadow stole;
For Love flew over grove and field,
Said, "Open, Rosebud, open, yield
Thy fragrant soul."

Among many varying testimonies to his work, one such as the following was sure to give him real pleasure. This was an album of his own verses, copied out by some young pupils of a large school at Brooklyn, with this inscription:

"To Alfred Lord Tennyson from his young friends in Public School No. 9, Brooklyn, New York, U.S.A."

On receiving the album he sent the following answers to the mistress and the scholars:

*To the Mistress.*

Will you present my little note to your scholars and give my best thanks to Miss Kate Stewart for her explanatory letter, and accept them yourself for your interesting account of American schools?

*To the Scholars.*

*March,* 1885.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

Your Christmas greeting only reached me the day before yesterday, and it was very welcome. I thank you heartily for having taken so much trouble to show me that what I have written gives you pleasure. Such kindly memorials as yours make me hope that, tho' the national bond between England and America was broken, the natural one of blood and language may bind us closer and closer from century to century.

Believe me your true old friend,

TENNYSON.

To the American poet Whittier, who had asked him to write some lines on General Gordon's death at Khartoum, he sent this reply:

"Your request has been forwarded to me, and I herein send you an epitaph for Gordon in our Westminster Abbey, i.e. for his cenotaph:

Warrior of God, man's friend, not here below,
But somewhere dead far in the waste Soudan,
Thou livest in all hearts, for all men know
This earth hath borne no simpler, nobler man."

He was so fearful of seeming to obtrude himself on the public, that, much as he had desired to help in realizing the idea of a camp for the training of poor boys as soldiers or emigrants, which he had discussed with General Gordon, it was not until encouraged by Miss Maude Stanley, ever energetic in all good work, that he consented to write to the Duke of Cambridge on the subject, and to allow me to send a letter to the *Times*[1].

Earlier in the year my father had been not less interested in the company for the purchase of land in different parts of England, to be resold at moderate prices to agricultural labourers. Although he took no public part in the work of forming the company, a task undertaken by Mr Auberon Herbert and Mr Albert Grey[2] and myself, his strongly expressed opinion no doubt furthered the cause. He believed that the agricultural labourer must be persuaded to remain in the rural districts, and he was convinced that to give him a freehold interest in the land

[1] See page 224. He always took the keenest interest in the 'Gordon Boys' Home,' and as late as August 1891, at the request of Sir Dighton Probyn and Sir George Higginson, wrote a letter to Sir Edwin Arnold in the *Daily Telegraph*, "Have we forgotten Gordon?" appealing for further subscriptions.

[2] Now Earl Grey.

he tilled was the best means of persuading him to do this, and also of insuring the stability of the Empire. A year or two later it was a gratification that a colony of agricultural labourers, some of them from the Isle of Wight, was taken out by Mr Arnold White to South Africa, and called "The Tennyson Colony."

In April the *Pall Mall Gazette* had some articles on the weakness of our navy, which roused my father to write for the *Times* his lines on "The Fleet." "These lines," Cardinal Manning said, "ought to be set to music and sung perpetually as a National song in every town of the Empire."

In August my father and I stayed at Gavelacre, a farm on an island in the Test, most kindly lent to us by Mr Stewart Hodgson. The Test here is a babbling stream, running by banks of loose-strife, meadow-sweet, and willow-herb.

My father wrote to Mr L. Vanderpool of New York, denying a malicious statement in some newspapers concerning Mr Bayard Taylor:

"An utter lie: according to the fashion of this cowardly and unchivalrous generation of bookmakers, which kicks the dead.

De mortuis nil nisi *malum*."

In the November *Macmillan* appeared one of the most remarkable of his later poems, "Vastness": and for the Royal Family he privately printed his lines on the marriage of Princess Beatrice, published in the *Times*, July 23rd.

The volume of *Tiresias, and other Poems* was published at the end of the year.

*Letters to friends*, 1885.

In December my father sent the following letter to Mr Bosworth Smith in defence of the Church:

*Dec. 12th*, 1885.

I thank you for your collected letters on the subject of Disestablishment. The letters, as they have reached me separately, I have read with the greatest interest. With you I believe that the Disestablishment and the Disendowment of the Church would prelude the downfall of much that is greatest and best in England. Abuses there are, no doubt, in the Church, as elsewhere, but these are not past remedy.

As to any vital changes in our Constitution, I could wish that some of our prominent politicians, who look to America as their ideal, might borrow from her an equivalent to that Conservatively restrictive provision under the Fifth Article of her Constitution[1]. I believe it would be a great safeguard to our own in these days of ignorant and reckless theorists.

I am yours truly, TENNYSON.

To a correspondent, who was writing the life of Rossetti and who asked for some original drawings by him, my father wrote:

I have neither drawing nor picture by Rossetti. I am sorry for it, for some of his work which I have seen elsewhere I admired very much. Nor have I any letter from him, nor do I remember his being present when I was reading the proofs of "Maud." Indeed I would willingly have known so fine a spirit

[1] No change can be made in the American Constitution unless it is ratified by conventions in three-fourths of the several states or by their Legislatures.

more intimately, but he kept himself so shut up that it was all but impossible to come at him. What you call "intimacy" never advanced much beyond acquaintance.

Yours truly, TENNYSON.

To Dr A. B. Grosart he wrote, thanking him for his edition of Spenser:

FARRINGFORD, 1885.

I owe you golden thanks for your magnificent edition of Spenser, of which I count myself very unworthy, for I am very unlearned not only in Spenser, but in most of our old poets, and I delight (not being a Bibliophil) rather in the "consummate flower" of a writer than in the whole of him, root and all, bad and good together. But of Vaughan, with the exception of "They are all gone into the world of light," I know absolutely nothing. I accept him on your authority, and willingly make one of your Committee. Again thanking you,

I am yours truly, TENNYSON.

*Notes by my father on "Tiresias, and other Poems," 1885.*

The Prologue describes Edward Fitzgerald, as we had seen him at Woodbridge in 1876.

His vegetarianism had interested my father, and he was charmed by the picture of the lonely philosopher, a "man of humorous-melancholy mark," with his gray floating locks, sitting among his doves, which perched about him on head and shoulder and knee, and cooed to him as he sat in the sunshine beneath his roses.

Fitzgerald wrote to Fanny Kemble of our visit, Sept. 21st, 1876: "Who should send in his card to me last week, but the old poet himself—he and his elder son Hallam passing through Woodbridge from a town in

Norfolk. 'Dear old Fitz,' ran the card in pencil, 'we are passing thro.' I had not seen him for twenty years—he looked much the same, except for his fallen locks; and what really surprised me was, that we fell at once into the old humour, as if we had only been parted twenty days instead of so many years. I suppose this is a sign of age—not altogether desirable. But so it was. He stayed two days, and we went over the same old grounds of debate, told some of the old stories, and all was well. I suppose I may never see him again."

The vegetarian dream, to which allusion is made in the poem, my father related to us in these words:

"I never saw any landscape that came up to the landscapes I have seen in my dreams. The mountains of Switzerland seem insignificant compared with the mountains I have imagined. One of the most wonderful experiences I ever had was this. I had gone without meat for six weeks, living only on vegetables; and at the end of the time, when I came to eat a mutton-chop, I shall never forget the sensation. I never felt such joy in my blood. When I went to sleep, I dreamt that I saw the vines of the South, with huge Eshcol branches, trailing over the glaciers of the North."

Edward Fitzgerald did not live to read the poem, dedicating the volume to him; but on its publication his widow wrote the following letter, which greatly touched my father.

I hope you will not think me intrusive, but I must especially thank you for the volume of poems just received. I had been eagerly looking for its appearance for some days, and that it should have come to me first from you touches me deeply.

I need not tell you that Lord Tennyson's tribute to the memory of his old friend has wakened in me many thoughts which, perhaps, you can better understand than I can tell, so few are now left who have the least idea of what he really was!

The very sight of this fresh volume, and even a hasty perusal of its passages, has brought back so many memories of "Days that seem to-day" (for I often live in them still), when that first volume, which took us all captive, and many a later one, used to be brought to our fireside, and read to my dear father[1] by that well-remembered voice.....

It was good of you to know how much I should value your gift.

The passage which my father liked to quote from the poem of "Tiresias" as a sample of his blank verse was:

But for me,
I would that I were gather'd to my rest,
And mingled with the famous kings of old,
On whom about their ocean-islets flash
The faces of the Gods—the wise man's word,
Here trampled by the populace underfoot,
There crown'd with worship—and these eyes will find
The men I knew, and watch the chariot whirl
About the goal again, and hunters race
The shadowy lion, and the warrior-kings,
In height and prowess more than human, strive
Again for glory, while the golden lyre
Is ever sounding in heroic ears
Heroic hymns, and every way the vales
Wind, clouded with the grateful incense-fume
Of those who mix all odour to the Gods
On one far height in one far-shining fire.

The poem of "The Wreck" was suggested by a catastrophe which happened to an Italian vessel, named the *Rosina*, bound from Catania for New York. "One day, at the end of October, she was nearly capsized by a sudden squall in the middle of the Atlantic. All hands were summoned instantly to take in sail, and all, together

[1] Bernard Barton, the "Quaker poet."

with the captain, were actively engaged, when an enormous wave swept the deck of every living person, leaving only one of the crew who happened to be below. For eight days he struggled against wind and sea, without taking an instant's repose, when the *Marianna*, a Portuguese brigantine, bore down upon her, as she was sinking, and rescued him."

The "Idyll of the King" in this volume, "Balin and Balan," was written soon after "Gareth and Lynette," but was not then published.

The simile beginning—

Thus as a hearth lit in a mountain home,

was suggested by what he often saw from his own study at Aldworth: the fire in the grate at night reflected in the window, and seemingly a fire raging in the woodland below.

Of "The Ancient Sage" he writes: "The whole poem is very personal. The passages about 'Faith' and the 'Passion of the Past' were more especially my own personal feelings. This 'Passion of the Past' I used to feel when a boy."

"The Flight," my father notes, "is a very early poem."

Of "Tomorrow" he writes that Aubrey de Vere had told him this story: "The body of a young man was laid out on the grass by the door of a Chapel in the West of Ireland, and an old woman came, and recognized it as that of her young lover, who had been lost in a peat bog many years before: the peat having kept him fresh and fair as when she last saw him[1]."

The "Epilogue" of "The Charge of the Heavy Brigade" was founded on a conversation that my father

[1] He corrected his Irish from Carleton's admirable *Traits of the Irish Peasantry*.

had had with Miss Laura Tennant (the late Mrs Alfred Lyttelton) on board the *Pembroke Castle*. He was offended by the way in which those who did not know him repeatedly accused him of loving war. So he wrote:

> And who loves War for War's own sake,
> Is fool or crazed or worse.

"To Virgil" was written at the request of the Mantuans for the nineteenth centenary of Virgil's death. There was at first a curious misprint in the poem: "Thou that singest wheat and woodland, *tithe* and vineyard," instead of "tilth and vineyard"; recalling to my father's mind the misprints of earlier poems: in "The Palace of Art," "Europa's mantle *blue*" for "blew": in "The Talking Oak," "The *modest* Cupid of the day" for "modish Cupid": in "The Princess," "Follow'd up by a hundred *hairy* does" for "airy does": in "Guinevere," "To where beyond these *vices* there is peace" for "voices."

"'The Dead Prophet,'" he notes, "is about no particular prophet."

He wrote it because he felt strongly that the world likes to know about the roughnesses, eccentricities, and defects of a man of genius rather than what he really is.

The whole volume was affectionately dedicated

"To my good friend Robert Browning, whose genius and geniality will best appreciate what may be best, and make most allowance for what may be worst."

*Sketch of the beginning of an unpublished poem, "Ormuzd and Ahriman"* (1885).

In the eternal day before the days were, the Almighty created Freewill in the two great spirits Ormuzd and Ahriman.

And these two came before the throne of the Almighty, and spoke to Him, saying, "Thou hast shown thyself of Almightiness to make us free; now therefore to be free is to act, how should we be idle?"

And the Lord said to them, "The elements are in your hands."

And they answered and said, "We will make the world."

And the Lord said, "One of you is dark, and one is bright, and ye will contend each against each, and your work will be evil. Ormuzd will put pleasure into that which he does, and Ahriman will put pain."

And Ormuzd said, "The pleasure will overbear the pain." And Ahriman said, "The pain will overbear the pleasure." And the Lord said to Ahriman, "Why wilt thou work against Ormuzd?" And Ahriman said, "I know not, Thou hast made me." And the Lord said, "I know why I have made thee, but thou knowest not." And the two went forth from before the Lord, and made the world.

# CHAPTER XVII.

## DEATH OF LIONEL. "LOCKSLEY HALL SIXTY YEARS AFTER."

1886.

> Not there to bid my boy farewell,
> When That within the coffin fell,
> Fell and flash'd into the Red Sea,
> Beneath a hard Arabian moon
> And alien stars.

We had always been so united a family that my brother Lionel's death, in April 1886 as he was returning from India, was an overwhelming grief to us, "a grief as deep as life or thought." From earliest childhood his had always been an affectionate and beautiful nature. While at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge, his imaginative qualities, his unselfishness, his open-heartedness, and humour were widely appreciated. After his engagement to Eleanor Locker he "passed well" into the India Office, which enabled him to marry (1878). It was a great pleasure to my brother that some of the higher official work was not seldom intrusted to his charge. None of his age there knew more about India, and I have not a few letters from his chiefs speaking in the warmest terms of his ability, and of the high place that, had he lived, he was destined to make for himself. With the natives of India in London he was popular, and his house (4 Sussex Place, Regent's Park) was always open to them.

His Blue Book on India is a model of clear style and condensation. As a relaxation from official work he wrote articles for magazines, and for the *Saturday Review*, and occasional poems, and took a great interest in music for the working classes. In 1885 at the invitation of Lord Dufferin he went with his wife on a tour to India, in order to see as much of the country as he could for himself. The part of his tour which he seemed to enjoy most was that in the old-world Rajputana. While shooting in Assam he caught jungle-fever. The poison was in his system when he attended the camp of exercise at Delhi, where during the military manœuvres he was exposed to very inclement weather. On his return to Calcutta he fell dangerously ill, and never recovered, but hung between life and death for three months and a half, bearing his sufferings with the utmost fortitude and with uncomplaining resignation. In the words of Lord Dufferin, "Nothing could exceed his courage, and his patience, and his goodness to us all." He started for home from Calcutta at the beginning of April. Then came the last days on the Red Sea. He spoke little and did not suffer much pain. He passed away peacefully at three in the afternoon of April 20th. The burial service was at nine that same evening, under a great silver moon. The ship stopped: and the coffin was lowered into a phosphorescent sea.

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In June Dr Oliver Wendell Holmes and his daughter visited us at Farringford. My father told him that he admired his "Chambered Nautilus." When they parted, Wendell Holmes said to him, "We have points of contact, have we not?" Which was true enough, especially in their humour. Holmes gives an account of this visit in his *Hundred Days in Europe*.

I saw the poet to the best advantage under his own trees and walking over his own domain. He took delight in pointing out to me the finest and the rarest of his trees, and there were many beauties among them. I recalled my morning's visit to Whittier at Oak Knoll, in Danvers, a little more than a year ago.

* * * * * *

In this garden of England, the Isle of Wight, where everything grows with such a lavish extravagance of greenness that it seems as if it must bankrupt the soil before autumn, I felt as if weary eyes and over-taxed brains might reach their happiest haven of rest.

* * * * * *

I am sorry that I did not ask Tennyson to read or repeat to me some lines of his own. Hardly anyone perfectly understands a poem but the poet himself. One naturally loves his own poem as no one else can. It fits the mental mould in which it was cast and it will not exactly fit any other. For this reason I had rather listen to a poet reading his own verses, than hear the best elocutionist that ever spouted recite them. He may not have a good voice or enunciation, but he puts his heart and his interpretative intelligence into every line, word and syllable. I should have liked to hear Tennyson read such lines as

"Laborious orient ivory, sphere in sphere."

My father was now in his seventy-seventh year. Wendell Holmes, Craik and his other guests were much struck "by his patience under his sorrow, and by his unselfish thoughtfulness for others."

Sometimes when he was with us alone he would say, "The thought of Lionel's death tears me to pieces, he was so full of promise and so young": and "to keep himself up" he worked harder than ever at his new "Locksley Hall." He was touched by one of the daily papers saying of his Ode "Welcome, welcome with one voice!" sung at the opening of the Colonial Exhibition, that "The twelve thousand people were deeply moved, remembering his sorrow."

The shepherd on our farm died this spring, an old fellow of ninety-two, with whom he had had many talks. On his tombstone was put, by my father's desire, "God's finger touch'd him and he slept." A little before his death he said: "I should like to see master again; he is a wonderful man for Nature and Life."

In the evenings my father would pace up and down Maiden's Croft, the meadow where "Enoch Arden" and "The Holy Grail" had come into being; he would admire the after-glow on the trees in St George's (the mediæval-looking field beyond), and would talk about the stars. The planet Venus was unusually bright, and he would say, "Can you imagine roaring London and raving Paris there in that point of peaceful light?" He would add, "While I said '*there*,' the earth has whirled 20 miles."

For his "daily airings" he often drove instead of walking, and favourite drives of his were to Calbourne to see "the huddling brook," or by the old-world thatched cottages of Thorley and Wellow to Newtown creek, or through the fishing-hamlets along the southern coast of the island. "The greatest inventor, it seems to me, must have been the inventor of a wheel," he said to me in one of these drives, during which he would discuss many subjects with great animation. Once he stopped under a telegraph post "to listen to the wail of the wires, the souls of dead messages." One day he discussed Plato's saying that "Of all wild beasts boys are the most unmanageable." Another day the second part of *Faust* and his love for the phantasmal Helen were mentioned. "The poem is full of splendid imagery, but far inferior on the whole to the first part."

He anxiously impressed upon his political friends this summer the necessity that England should keep up a fleet equal to France and Russia combined. "The democracy," he said, "does not appreciate that our

trade depends upon the strength of our fleet, and on our having docks and coaling-stations in the Mediterranean and elsewhere. England would not, as in old days, be able to depend upon her vast resources, since there could not be a continued struggle. There would be but a short preparation for a naval war now, and one naval defeat for us would mean that we should sink at once into a third-rate power. The fleet of England is her all in all."

In July we saw Lady Archibald Campbell and her company act scenes from "Becket," in the Canizzaro Wood, at Wimbledon, and my father thought them effective among the glades of oak and fern.

We then stayed with Mr and Mrs Knowles in St James's Park: and visited the Colonial Exhibition. Nothing pleased him more than Miss North's drawings and the Indians working at their trades: he much admired the inlaid alabaster from Agra; and the modelled landscape of old Australia also interested him greatly.

In the evening we went to a performance of *Faust* at the Lyceum: the representation he found too melodramatic for his taste.

Towards the end of the month we lunched with the Tyndalls at the Royal Institution on our way to Norfolk. At Cromer the Locker-Lampsons were our hosts, taking us excursions to Gunton, Felbrigg, and Hempsted, and one day we sailed on Wroxham Broad, a large inland lake, surrounded by woods and fringed with willow-herb and bulrushes. The variously coloured sails of the wherries made my father think the whole landscape like a picture of Holland. This part of Norfolk was pleasant to him, differing as it did from any other English scenery which he knew.

On August 7th we went to Cambridge. My father stayed at Trinity, in rooms belonging to Dr Glaisher, overlooking the lime avenue. On the first evening we

dined with Jenkinson (the University Librarian), the second with Aldis Wright, the Vice-Master.

The conversation fell on Shakespeare and Miss Austen, and from this glanced at a letter (lately published) from Mrs Cameron to Sir Henry Taylor, reporting some sportive attack made by my father upon autograph hunters, which certain newspapers, in quoting, had taken seriously. On this letter my father commented: "It is very possible that I went on in a whirling way, saying I was afraid that every crime was attributable to autograph hunters. I can quite fancy myself saying this, but I could never have imagined that anyone could be so totally deficient in humour as to take it seriously."

On our return to Aldworth we had various guests. Among others Canon Ainger, the Euan-Smiths, Sir Andrew and Lady Clark, and Lord Napier of Magdala. Lord Napier, a truly great and simple man, talked freely with my father on many topics. On one occasion they discussed competitive examinations, which my father considered were overdone now-a-days. Lord Napier laughingly suggested that we might become so advanced that men would hire themselves out as in China to pass examinations for other men, "Crupper bachelors," as they are called there.

My father questioned him closely about the relief of Lucknow, and as to whether he might have put in his poem "And ever upon the topmost *tower* (instead of *roof*) our banner of England blew," as the sound was better. Lord Napier said that he might have done so, and added that from the poem he should have thought the author had been present at the siege; that he himself had gone up with Havelock and Outram, being in command of the rear guard, and had "got in at night." Then he told how he had mined under a house occupied by the rebels, which jutted out into the Residency ground, and found vaults underneath; and

how he had lurked in a dark corner, where the rebels passed him so closely that the dust was actually wafted on his face as they passed. There, nevertheless, he placed three barrels of gunpowder, laid a train and blew up house, rebels and all. "It was a terrible time," said my father, "for England, but from this mutiny our race grew in strength." The conversation then reverted to China. My father observed that he thought the Chinese, who lived on a very little, could imitate everything, and had no fear of death, would, not long hence, under good leadership be a great power in the world. Lord Napier agreed with him, and said that their contempt of death had on one occasion come painfully home to himself. A whole family had drowned themselves in a well, whether out of pique or fear he did not know, because he himself had refused to accept a dog, which he had petted and they had offered to him. "No incident," he added, "ever impressed me with so much horror."

They then touched on vivisection, my father expressing his conviction that without anæsthetics no animal should be cut open for the sake of science. "I have been reading," he said, "of the horrible and brutal experiments in Italy and France; and my whole heart goes out to a certain writer in the *Spectator*, who declared he had yet to find out mankind was worth the cruel torture of a single dumb animal." Lord Napier replied he never carried a gun now or even walked with shooters: "I have had enough of killing, and I can't bear to see an animal killed."

At the end of the year, as my father was walking with Ralston (the Russian scholar), in Freshwater, he came across an old Wesleyan preacher dead in the road, who had died on his way to the Wesleyan Chapel. My father wrote to one of the near relatives: "I cannot but look upon his death as a happy one; sudden, painless,

while he was on his way to his chapel, to render thanks and praise to his Maker. Our Liturgy prays against sudden death; but I myself could pray for such a sudden death as Isaac Porter's."

In December "The Promise of May" and "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After" were published (dated 1887).

"Locksley Hall" was dedicated to my mother, partly because it seemed to my father that the two "Locksley Halls" were likely to be in the future two of the most historically interesting of his poems, as descriptive of the tone of the age at two distant periods of his life: partly perhaps because the following four lines were written immediately after the death of my brother, and described his chief characteristics:

Truth, for Truth is Truth, he worshipt, being true as he was brave;
Good, for Good is Good, he follow'd, yet he look'd beyond the grave!
Truth for Truth, and Good for Good! The Good, the True, the Pure, the Just!
Take the charm "For ever" from them and they crumble into dust.

My father said that the old man in the second "Locksley Hall" had a stronger faith in God and in human goodness than he had had in his youth; but he had also endeavoured to give the moods of despondency which are caused by the decreased energy of life.

His MS note on the poem is: "A dramatic poem, and Dramatis Personæ are imaginary. Since it is so much the fashion in these days to regard each poem and story as a story of the poet's life or part of it, may I not be allowed to remind my readers of the possibility, that some event which comes to the poet's knowledge, some hint flashed from another mind, some thought or feeling

arising in his own, or some mood coming—he knows not whence or how—may strike a chord from which a poem evolves its life, and that this to other eyes may bear small relation to the thought, or fact, or feeling, to which the poem owes its birth, whether the tenor be dramatic, or given as a parable?"

These four unpublished lines of the old "Locksley Hall" were the nucleus of the "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After":

In the hall there hangs a painting—Amy's arms about my neck:
Happy children in a sunbeam sitting on the ribs of wreck.
In my life there was a picture—she that clasp'd my neck had flown;
I was left within the shadow, sitting on the wreck alone.

The following letter from Lord Lytton to Miss Mary Anderson was kept by my father, as containing valuable remarks on the drift of the poem:

It is a great poem, worthy of the maturity of a great poet; and, so far from suggesting to my mind any unpleasing sense of incongruity with the first part of "Locksley Hall," it enormously enhances the interest and spacious significance of that delightful work. In this respect it is a most felicitous exception to the generally unsatisfactory character of sequels, written in later life, by the authors of early masterpieces. Goethe's *Helena* has no vital connection with his *Faust*. But the old lover of "Locksley Hall" is exactly what the young man must have become, without any changes of character by force of time and experience, if he had grown with the growth of his age.—For that reason alone, the poem in its entirety has a peculiar historical importance as the impersonation of the emotional life of a whole generation. Its psychological portraiture is perfect—its workmanship exquisite—and its force and freshness of poetic fervour wonderful. But I admire it not alone as a work of genius and

a work of art, I admire it, if possible, still more as a *work of courage*—that is to say, as a moral action. An influential writer has many responsibilities to those his writings have influenced. But there is this curse in literary popularity. It stimulates self-consciousness, and makes the popular author afraid of risking popularity, by wandering out of the groove in which it has been acquired. Tennyson's earlier poems, which are household words, and more especially "Locksley Hall," have furnished misunderstood and misapplied texts to a whole tribe of traders in silly and pernicious rubbish of Neo-Radicalism. In deprecating his high literary authority from such abuse of it, and repudiating the worship of false prophets, he discharged a literary duty sure to expose him, in the fullness of his fame, to a good deal of unjust and more or less spiteful criticism. His publication of this poem was therefore a courageous act.

## *Letters to and from friends.*

### 1886.

### *To Charles Esmarch, Malvern Links (about "Locksley Hall" and a German translation).*

SIR,

I thank you for the gift of your translation, but I must object and strongly to the statement in your Preface that *I* am the hero in either poem. I never had a cousin Amy, "Locksley Hall" is an entirely imaginative edifice. My grandsons are little boys. I am not even white-headed, I never had a gray hair in my head. The whole thing is a dramatic impersonation, but I find in almost all modern criticism this absurd tendency to personalities. Some of my thought may come out into the poem, but am I therefore the hero? *There is not one touch of biography in it from beginning to end.* Thanking you for your elegant volume,

I am yours very faithfully,

TENNYSON.

Of Mr Gladstone's Home Rule scheme for Ireland my father said at this date: "Gladstone and the Radicals know that it is infinitely easy to destroy the constitution of a state, but do not realize that it is infinitely hard to reconstruct it"; and he sent Mr Gladstone the following lines from Pindar:

*Ῥᾴδιον μὲν γὰρ πόλιν σεῖσαι καὶ ἀφαυροτέροις·*
*ἀλλ' ἐπὶ χώρας αὖτις ἔσσαι δυσπαλὲς δὴ γίγνεται, ἐξαπίνας*
*εἰ μὴ θεὸς ἀγεμόνεσσι κυβερνατὴρ γένηται.*

*To Miss Chapman (author of an "Analysis of In Memoriam" lately published by Messrs Macmillan).*

ALDWORTH, HASLEMERE,
*Nov. 23rd*, 1886.

MADAM,

I am grateful to you for your book which contains an analysis of "In Memoriam." I like this much better than Mr Gatty's, which perhaps you have seen, and which is too personal to please me. Yours is excellent in taste and judgment. I like too what you say about Comtism. I really could almost fancy that p. 95 was written by myself. I have been saying the same thing for years in all but the same words. I think that you have not touched upon one argument against *their* subjective immortality, viz. that, according to astronomical and geological probabilities, this great goddess Humanity in a certain number of ages will breathe her last gasp, and leave the earth without even a Comtist.

I should say, as Napoleon is reported to have said. When someone was urging upon him how much more glorious was the immortality of a great artist, a painter for instance, than that of a great soldier, he asked how

long the best painted and best preserved picture would last. "About 800 years." "Bah! telle immortalité!"

Yours very faithfully, TENNYSON.

*From the Honourable James C. Reed.*

THE UNION LEAGUE CLUB,
NEW YORK CITY, *Nov. 27th*, 1886.

MY LORD,

For some years I had the honor to be the private secretary of Chester A. Arthur, lately the President of the United States. Shortly before the death of President Garfield, but subsequent to his wounding, some thoughtful Englishman had sent the Vice-President some unpublished lines of yours, which I remember Mr Arthur quoted to me as he and I rode from his private residence in New York to the train that was to take General Grant and himself to Elberon, where President Garfield had died the previous day.

As nearly as I can now recall, the lines ran thuswise:

> Not he that breaks the dams; but he
> That, through the channels of the State,
> Convoys the people's wish, is great.
> His name is—

Will you do me the honor to correct and to finish the quotation?

I should not trouble you in this if I knew where to find the verse quoted.

It has always seemed to me that it was the keynote of Mr Arthur's life as President of the United States, and I judge it fitting to inscribe upon his tomb.

Yours faithfully, J. C. REED.

My father answered him that the line for which he asked was printed in the "Shakespearian Show-Book," 1884:

> His name is pure, his fame is free.

*From Robert Browning.*

19 WARWICK CRESCENT, *Dec. 16th*, 1886.

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

Once more, and just as ever, you make me grateful for a new poem, strong and fine indeed. I could wish it were a substantively new and independent piece; you cannot write such a wonder as the old "Locksley Hall" without startling us by any sort of change of its perfection, even the introducing into it of other and novel perfection. I am myself printing something which will go to you ere very long, and with it I shall send an old book from my father's library which has somehow strayed from the keeping of a kinsman of yours, I am ignorant in what degree. I had it in my mind to return it many years ago, and will not let the present opportunity go by. I have to thank Hallam heartily for his clever *Jack*. Somehow the modernised giant does not suit my memories, but that is Caldecott's affair. I know you will believe in my truest wishes of all happiness for you all; as long as I live I am ever

Affectionately yours, ROBERT BROWNING.

# CHAPTER XVIII.

## SOCIETY, POLITICS, CRUISE IN THE "STELLA."

## 1887–88.

In January Stanford's "Revenge" was sung in the Albert Hall, and my father thought the setting of his poem dramatic and fine.

He went to London and paid a visit to his old friend Mrs Procter. I asked him how it had passed, as it was the last time he saw her. He wrote that the talk ended thus:

"*I.* I am 78 and you are 87, and in all probability we shall not meet again.

*Mrs Procter.* Don't you young folk be impertinent to your elders. (Gallant old girl.)"

"The Jubilee Ode" was finished in February[1], and "Demeter" in May.

He would now quote long pieces from Andrew Marvell to us, "The Bermudas," "The Garden," and he told us that he had made Carlyle laugh for half-an-hour at the following line from "The character of Holland"—

"They, with mad labour, fish'd the land to shore."

"And," he continued, "about poetry or art Carlyle knew nothing. I would never have taken his word about either; but as an honest man, yes—on any subject in the world."

His memory was certainly still as wonderful as ever,

[1] Published in *Macmillan's Magazine*, April, 1887.

and, when his eyes were tired with incessant reading of all manner of books, on Travel, on Astronomy, on Natural Science,—not to mention novels by the dozen,—he reaped the gains of remembrance, and would say: "It is a great advantage to learn first-rate poetry and prose early by heart, because they recur to the memory when we lose later things. I have found them a great comfort and solace. We grow old and, from weariness or weakness, become incapable of retaining new things properly."

In August Professor Jebb was with us, and he watched an eclipse of the moon from the balcony of the sitting-room window with my father, who said that, according to analogy, at least one of the planets belonging to each sun should be inhabited, though perhaps with beings very different from ourselves: and that the spectroscope was destined to make much greater revelations even than it had already made, in charming

Her secret from the latest moon.

Jebb's visit and favourable opinion of my father's later poems gratified him, and set him working with fresh vigour.

In this month we had many guests.

Miss Mary Anderson was acting in *The Winter's Tale* in London and came to visit us, and signed an agreement to produce "The Cup." My father wrote four new lines for her, to be sung before the priestesses in the Temple:

Artemis, Artemis, hear us, O mother, hear us and bless us!
Artemis, thou that art life to the wind, to the wave, to the glebe, to the fire,
Hear thy people who praise thee! O help us from all that oppress us.
Hear thy priestesses hymn thy glory! O yield them all their desire.

Some of his talk was at this time roughly noted down:

"Evil must come upon us headlong, if morality tries to get on without religion."

"When I see society vicious and the poor starving in great cities, I feel that it is a mighty wave of evil passing over the world, but that there will be yet some new and strange development, which I shall not live to see."

He quoted Bacon's "Opportuni magnis conatibus rerum transitus." "You must not be surprised at anything that comes to pass in the next fifty years. All ages are ages of transition, but this is an awful moment of transition. It seems to me as if there were much less of the old reverence and chivalrous feeling in the world than there used to be. I am old and I may be wrong, for this generation has assuredly some spirit of chivalry. We see it in acts of heroism by land and sea, in fights against the slave trade, in our Arctic voyages, in philanthropy, etc. The truth is that the wave advances and recedes. I tried in my 'Idylls' to teach men these things, and the need of the Ideal. But I feel sometimes as if my life had been a very useless life."

"Especially do I want people to recognize that the women of our western hemisphere represent the highest type of woman, greatly owing to the respect and honour paid to them by men, but that the moment the honour and respect are diminished, the high type of woman will vanish."

About reticence in art he said: "I agree with Wordsworth that Art is selection. Look at Zola for instance: he shows the evils of the world without the ideal. His Art becomes monstrous therefore, because he does not practise selection. In the noblest genius there is need of self-restraint."

"The higher moral imagination enslaved to sense

is like an eagle caught by the feet in a snare, baited with carrion, so that it cannot use its wings to soar."

Speaking of Ireland and England, he said: "The Celtic race does not easily amalgamate with other races, as those of Scandinavian origin do, as for instance Saxon and Norman, which have fused perfectly. The Teuton has no poetry in his nature like the Celt, and this makes the Celt much more dangerous in politics, for he yields more to his imagination than his common-sense. Yet his imagination does not allow of his realizing the sufferings of poor dumb beasts. The Irish are difficult for us to deal with. For one thing the English do not understand their innate love of fighting, words and blows. If on either side of an Irishman's road to Paradise shillelahs grew, which automatically hit him on the head, yet he would not be satisfied. Suppose that we allowed Ireland to separate from us: owing to its factions she would soon fall a prey to some foreign power. She has absolute freedom now, and a more than full share in the government of one of the mightiest empires in the world. Whatever she may say, she is not only feudal, but oriental, and loves those in authority over her to have the iron hand in the silken glove."

"I do not the least mind if England, when the people are less ignorant and more experienced in self-government, eventually *becomes a democracy*. But violent, selfish, unreasoning democracy, would bring expensive bureaucracy, and the iron rule of a Cromwell. Let the demagogues remember, 'Liberty forgetful of others is licence, and nothing better than treason.' The hero of the morning is too often the traitor of the afternoon. It was the mob who smashed the Duke of Wellington's windows on the anniversary of Waterloo. As Goethe says, 'The worst thing in the world is ignorance in motion.' The world would grow into the wickedest of worlds should all this babble and

gabble ever succeed in impressing on the people that the obligation of contract is mere tyranny, and that law is nothing but coercion.

"At present we are freer, so most Americans tell me, than America. I have trust in the reason of the English people (who have an inborn respect for law), when they have time to reason; I believe in 'our crown'd republic's crowning common-sense.'"

He acknowledged that there is a greater feeling of the Unity of Society than there was in his young days. But he would say: "The whole of Society at present is too like a jelly; when it is touched, it shakes from base to summit. As yet the Unity is of weakness rather than of strength. The difference of individualities must always exist, and since we are members of one body, different gifts are needed to supply the wants of that body. Our aim therefore ought to be not to merge the individual in the community, but to strengthen the social life of the community[1], and foster the individuality."

Speaking of the ultra-Radicals' passion for change, he said: "Stagnation is more dangerous than Revolution. But *sudden* change means a house on sand. Action and Reaction is the miserable see-saw of our child-world. If these extreme men had their way, the end of the century would be plunged in blood, a universal French Revolution. What we have to bear in mind is that, even in a Republic, there must be a guiding hand. Men of education, experience, weight, and wisdom, must continue to come forward. They who will not be ruled by the rudder will in the end be ruled by the rock.

There be rocks old and new!
There a haven full in view!

[1] He had a great belief in the Cooperative movements of the day, from the "Rochdale pioneers" onwards.

Art thou wise? Art thou true?
Then, in change of wind and tide,
List no longer to the crew!
Captain, guide!"

## *Cruise in the "Stella" to St David's, Clovelly, Tintagil, and the Channel Isles during the Summer of* 1887.

We took Sir Allen Young's yacht, the *Stella*, for a short cruise this summer. The sea was calm as a mill-pond, and the sunshine glorious.

Many of the crew had been more than once to the Arctic regions, and interested my father by their yarns, and their love for their wives and families impressed him much.

We anchored at Dartmouth, and the pretty harbour, winding in among the hills, had quite an Italian look, when we sailed out in the early morning. We passed the Lizard, very wild, and when we rounded the Land's End innumerable mackerel boats with their brown sails made "pretty Cuyp pictures." My father often gazed into the depths of the sea, searching, as he said, for some ruins of town or castle, parts of the ancient Lyonnesse. "Dark Tintagil" was sighted at some distance, then we left the "thundering shores of Bude and Bos," and steamed across to Lundy Island. The green sea and the red sunset made a rich contrast, and at night my father called our attention to Venus, reflected twenty or thirty times in the ripples. Wild fowl screamed overhead. From Lundy we sailed next morning to Solva (the little river), a creek in St Bride's Bay.

Guided by a friendly sea-captain, we found a tax-cart, and drove to St David's. What a drive it was! My father grew melancholy, and declared that we should "soon see his spine piercing the top of his head."

He liked the Cathedral of St David's, with its square tower, and spacious nave, and sumptuously carved arches. We saw the ancient croziers of several bishops, and my father asked if there was one belonging by tradition to the holy Dubric, who wedded Arthur and Guinevere. The ruined Bishop's Palace is the finest building of its kind anywhere, and the banks of the little stream, which runs by it, were beautiful with lady-fern and yellow iris.

After dinner we listened to Welsh songs sung by the school-children, and as we left for the yacht the townspeople crowded round our carriage, to see my father, and shake him by the hand. "Very simple, cordial folk" he thought them. After touching at Milford Haven, Tenby, and Saundersfoot, we arrived at Ilfracombe in the dark, and pilots came out to meet us, burning lights, to find out if we wanted a pilot. "These mystic lights, and the buoy-bell perpetually ringing at the Land's End," my father said, "would have furnished good similes for Dante."

Next day we landed at Clovelly, and he thought it one of the most beautiful places he had seen. It reminded him of Enoch Arden's village, although "Long lines of cliff breaking had left a chasm" was not true of Clovelly; he did not think of any particular village when writing the poem. We climbed the steps to the top of the village, and walked to Clovelly Court, "the most paradisal country seat next to Wilton," he said. The white May-trees were in full bloom, and over them, and the oaks, and the limes, one saw the broad belt of the sea: and he quoted—

Bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea.

Then we weighed anchor, sailed to Tintagil, and landed with extreme difficulty in the cove where king Arthur, as a babe, was borne in on a wave. Two sailors helped my father up the cliff. An old woman rushed out of her cottage, and said that she had seen him in that same spot fifty years ago, and began to recite passages from the "Idylls."

The ruined castle on the promontory is jagged and weird, and the height, where Iseult sat in the last tournament, had evidently in old days been "crowned with towers." My father gazed at what he called "the secret postern" arch, through which the babe had been handed to Merlin. He enjoyed the rushing of the sea under the great cave, and the splendour of the many-coloured sea-weeds, and carefully examined each bit of sorrel and thrift that grew among the ruins. The old memories and visions of the "Idylls" came upon him, and he regarded the whole place with a kind of first-love feeling.

We drank to the health of the *Stella*, and to "Arthur's Return."

On our way home we stopped at Falmouth, Fowey, and Plymouth, and crossed the Channel to Guernsey and Jersey.

My uncle Frederick lived near St Heliers, and we visited him in his house, overlooking the town and harbour of St Heliers, Elizabeth Castle, and St Aubyn's Bay. The two old brothers talked much of bygone days; of the "red honey gooseberry," and the "golden apples" in Somersby garden, and of the tilts and tourneys they held in the fields; of the old farmers and "swains"; of their college friends; and of the waste shore at Mablethorpe: and then turned to later days, and to the feelings of old age. My father said of Frederick's poems that "they were organ-tones echoing among the mountains": and quoted a fine sonnet of his:

*Poetic Happiness.*

There is a fountain, to whose flowery side
By diverse ways the children of the earth
Run day and night, athirst to measure forth
Its pure sweet waters, health and wealth and pride,
Power clad in arms, and wisdom argus-eyed;
But One apart from all is seen to stand,
And take up in the hollow of his hand
What to their golden vessels is denied,
Baffling their utmost reach. He, born and nursed
In the glad sound and freshness of the place,
Drinks momently its dews, and feels no thirst;
And sorrows for that troop as it returns
Thro' the waste wilderness with empty arms.

My uncle had grown more of a spiritualist than ever, believing in table-rapping; and in an unmusical girl being "made to play the most difficult music on the piano by invisible influence": and in an old gentleman having been "conveyed through solid walls all in a moment, and found in the courtyard of a house a mile and a half distant, the gates of which were closed and locked." A lively discussion took place between him and my father about these so-called revelations. My father spoke after this fashion: "I grant you that spiritualism must not be judged by its quacks: but I am convinced that God and the ghosts of men would choose something other than mere table-legs through which to speak to the heart of man. You tell me it is my duty to give up everything in order to propagate spiritualism. I cannot see what grounds of proof (as yet) you have to go on.

There is really too much flummery mixed up with it, supposing, as I am inclined to believe, there is something in it."

Nevertheless the brothers parted on the best of terms, and Frederick told Alfred, as they parted, that "not for twenty years had he spent such a happy day."

Thence we went to Alderney, and explored the island; then to Cherbourg; and next morning anchored in Freshwater Bay.

The last entry for this year is that on Dec. 15th "Owd Roä" was finished for press. My father's note on the poem is: "I read in one of the daily papers of a child saved by a black retriever from a burning house. The details in this story are of course mine."

During this year "Vastness" was published in *Macmillan's Magazine* of March; and his MS note is, "What matters anything in this world without full faith in the Immortality of the Soul and of Love?"

*Letters to and from friends, 1887.*

A kindly recognition of his "Will Waterproof," in the shape of an old tankard from the Cock Tavern, pleased him. He answered:

FARRINGFORD, FRESHWATER, I. W.

I have this morning, Jan. 13th, received the old Cock Tavern tankard. Will you give my best thanks to Messrs Spiers and Pond for their present, and tell them that I shall keep it as an heirloom in my family, as a memorial not only of the old vanished Tavern but also of their kindness?

Yours faithfully, TENNYSON.

*To Walt Whitman.*

1887.

DEAR OLD MAN,

I, the elder old man, have received your article and the *Critic*, and send you in return my thanks

and New Year's greeting on the wings of this East wind, which I trust is blowing softlier and warmlier on your good gray head than here, where it is rocking the elms and ilexes of my Isle of Wight garden.

Always yours, TENNYSON.

*Extract from a letter from the Master of Balliol to my mother.*

WEST MALVERN, *July 3rd*, 1887.

I hope you have good accounts of the travellers in the *Stella*. They have had a charming season for their voyage. Besides the gain to health many new thoughts will have been suggested by it. I always wish for Lord Tennyson, not that he should cease to write, because he has written so much and so well; but that every year he should find something suited to his genius, and that all his friends should urge him not backwards but forwards. This seems to me the best for himself and for the world. His memory and his powers are so undiminished and his experience so increased, that I think he might even now surpass himself.

I should like some poems in which the truth of things or some side of the truth is clearly expressed, "a last vision of things."

Browning spent a few days with me at Commemoration. He is a very extraordinary man, very generous and truthful, and quite incapable of correcting his literary faults, which at first sprang from carelessness and an uncritical habit, and now are born and bred in him. He has no form, or has it only by accident when the subject is limited. His thought and feeling and knowledge are generally out of all proportion to his powers of expression. Since I have been ill I have been reading a good deal of his poems, and have come to like him, and in some measure to understand him. He spoke with great enthusiasm of the "Eastern Sage," and seemed to have caught the spirit. He is always generous and kind in what he says about Alfred.

*To Walt Whitman.*

*November 15th*, 1887.

DEAR WALT WHITMAN,

I thank you for your kind thought of me. I value the photograph much, and I wish that I could see not only this sun-picture, excellent as I am told it is, but also the living original. May he still live and flourish for many years to be. The coming year should give new life to every American who has breathed a breath of that soul which inspired the great founders of the American Constitution, whose work you are to celebrate. Truly, the mother country, pondering on this, may feel that how much soever the daughter owes to her, she, the mother, has, nevertheless, something to learn from the daughter. Especially I would note the care taken to guard a noble constitution from rash and unwise innovators.

I am always yours, TENNYSON.

1888.

At Easter Miss Mary Anderson was with us again and he read to her, whom he admired much, and held to be "the flower of girlhood," "The Leper's Bride," just finished.

In June we showed her parts of the New Forest, notably Mark Ash and the Queen's Bower, because she wished to perform "The Foresters," as well as "The Cup."

She reminds me that, when she had asked my father some years ago whether she should in *The Winter's Tale* play the parts of both "Hermione" and "Perdita," or whether this would be too much against stage tradition, he had urged her to undertake the double part, quoting as to "Perdita" the words, "The majesty of the creature in resemblance of the mother[1]." And then he burst forth: "Thank God, the time is past for

[1] *The Winter's Tale*, Act v. Sc. 2.

the Press to make or mar a poem, play, or artist. Few original things are well received at first. People must grow accustomed to what is out of the common, before adopting it. Your idea if carried out, as you feel it, will be well received generally, and before long." "You probably do not know," Miss Anderson adds, "what a great comfort and help your father was to his friends by his wisdom and decision[1]."

In August my father and I visited Chichester and Kingly Vale, where is a grove of yews which Mr Lear had sketched for "Oriana"; and we wandered far by the side of the Lavant, and among the beech-feathered coombs in the Downs. Leaning over a gate and looking over the woods he repeated his "Vastness," and "Far, far away," without hesitating for a moment.

One day he went off by himself to see an old labourer of ninety, and came back saying, "He tells me that he is waiting for death and is quite ready. What a sin it would be if anyone were to disturb that old man's faith!"

To Aldworth, in the early autumn, came for the last time our old friend Mr G. S. Venables, who with a highly cultivated intellect, a clear judgment, great strength of character, and a somewhat haughty bearing, had a deeply tender heart and was loved by children.

[1] Mrs de Navarro (Miss Anderson) writes in her *Memories:* "I had the happiness of joining him in the two hours' walk which, rain or shine, he took daily. His tender interest in every 'bud and flower and leaf' was charming. How many pretty legends he had about each! The cliffs, the sky, the sea, and shrubs, the very lumps of chalk under foot, he had a word for them all. The things he read in Nature's book were full of the same kind of poetry as his own; and the 'sunbeams of his cheerful spirit' flood all my memories of those delightful walks. Though nearer 80 than 70, his step was so rapid, he moved so briskly, that it was with difficulty I kept up with him. The last twenty minutes of the two hours generally ended in a kind of trot. Weather never interrupted his exercise. He scorned an umbrella. With his long dark mantle and thick boots, he defied all storms. When his large-brimmed hat became heavy with water, he would stop and give it a great shake, saying, 'How much better this is than to be huddled over the fire for fear of a little weather!' His great strength and general health were due, no doubt, to the time he spent so regularly in the open air."

# CHAPTER XIX.

## MY FATHER'S ILLNESS, 1888: AND CRUISE IN THE "SUNBEAM," 1889.

The following notes were written by desire of my father's doctors, who said that it was important to know not only the state of his physical health, but also something of what was occupying his mind.

*Aldworth.* On September 9th my father walked with Sir Alfred Lyall, and expressed great interest in Sir Alfred's conviction of the possibility of a religious revival in India. After the walk he complained that his knee hurt him. This was the commencement of his bad attack of rheumatic gout this winter, brought on chiefly by walking in the rain and storm, and getting drenched. As our friend Sir James Paget was away from London on his holiday, we telegraphed for Sir Prescott Hewitt, who came at once, and was most kind and wise in his treatment.

The doctors who attended my father were surprised at the simplicity of his bedroom. The room contained plain Chippendale, and oak chairs, an old oak table and wardrobe, a couch, and a brass bedstead with white dimity curtains, and a little table for his candles, since he read much at night. There were books lying about everywhere; and three or four good pictures hung on the walls—a forest pool, the interior of Chartres cathedral, the creek of Bosham (described in "Becket") whence Harold set sail for Normandy, Mrs Greville as his Queen Mary, and a Bartolozzi print of children dancing—the gift of Mrs G. F. Watts.

During the day he lay on his sofa near the south window of

his study, and told us that, looking out on the great landscape, he had wonderful thoughts about God and the Universe, and felt as if looking into the other world. He liked my mother to be in the room with him even when he slept. Strange dreams came to him of fir woods and cliffs and temples. One night he thought that he was bound to visit all the ironclads in Her Majesty's fleet. Another night he dreamt that he was Pope of the world, and that his shoulders were weighted down by all its sins and all its miseries.

He had two bad relapses. The first day he came downstairs he talked with us about *Job*, which he thought one of the greatest of books. He asked for St John, the 'little children, love one another' passage, and the Sermon on the Mount.

Among others he read or had read to him at this time the following books and essays: Leaf's edition of the *Iliad*; the *Iphigenia in Aulis*, expressing "wonder at its modernness"; Matthew Arnold on Tolstoi; Fiske's *Destiny of Man*; Gibbon's History, especially praising the *Fall of Constantinople*; Keats' poems; Wordsworth's "Recluse." Of this last he said: "I like the passages which have been published before, such as that about the dance of the flock of birds, driven by a thoughtless impulse. The poem is rambling, with fine lines,—for instance:

'The fierce confederate storm
Of sorrows barricaded evermore
Within the walls of cities.'"

He often looked at his Virgil, more than ever delighting in what he called "that splendid end of the second *Georgic*."

He was marvellously patient, and his humorous view of his own helpless condition helped him through some weary hours. At the crisis of his illness he made an epigram about himself, and on the pain killing the devil that was born in him eighty years back. The doctors, fearing another relapse, ordered his removal in an invalid carriage to Farringford. He remarked on his journey to the doctor in attendance, who was generalizing about humanity: "You see a great deal of mankind, but it is *mankind sick*—the devil a saint would be! do you therefore think you know mankind?"

*Farringford.* To both Dr Dabbs and Dr Hollis he generally talked politics. Some of his chance sayings are recorded below:

"I am afraid patriotism is very rare."

"The love of country, which makes a man defend his landmark, that we all have, and the Anglo-Saxon more than most other races: but the patriotism that declines to link itself with the small fry of the passing hour for political advantage—that is rare, I say."

"The Duke of Wellington had both kinds of patriotism."

"Carlyle said of the Duke's speeches that they had effect because he kept hitting the nail on the head, repeating the same thing over and over again."

"It is the authors, more than the diplomats, who make nations love one another."

"To decry one original poet in order to magnify another is like despising an oak-tree because you prefer a beech, and almost as sensible."

"Every agitator should be made to prove his means of livelihood."

"True progress is gradation."

"Nihilism in Russia will never be laid at rest until an Emperor comes, bold enough to trust the people and chance the hatred of the nobles. He may be assassinated, but he will be the saviour of Russia. The Russians do not ask for much. Their men of thought, who are their men of action in domestic politics, ask for a graduated scale of liberty. Their moderation must have struck you."

"We ought not to show our Arsenals and Dockyards to the world, as we do. Want of confidence is hateful among members of a family, but want of confidence is necessary among nations."

"In a war we English do not listen to argument until we are victorious."

"In foreign affairs Palmerston saw further than he is ever credited with seeing."

"Education, as we call education, would have spoilt John Bright."

He said that there are many boys who would be far better equipped for their life's work if they learnt modern languages, or had a scientific training, instead of spending so many years on Greek and Latin: but that these ought to be made to study the old stories of heroism, and the masterpieces of ancient literature in good translations, if they had not time to read them in the original. "Yet," he added, "the benefit of most translations

from *poetry*, except they be by true poets, seems to me mainly to rest with the translators."

"Beware of breaking up the soil of any Faith, when you have no better seed to sow."

"The Queen has a wonderful knowledge of politics, quite wonderful: and her sagacity about them seems unerring. The Queen never mistakes her people."

At the crisis of his illness the following letters from Mr Jowett and Browning comforted him:

*From the Master of Balliol to Hallam Tennyson.*

I should have so liked to have spoken to your father once more but I must not intrude upon you at such a time.

Will you give again and again my love to him? He is one of two or three friends, for whom I have done so little, though I have received so much from them.

I hope that he will exert himself to recover if there is still time for such a word. A strong will has brought me back to life before now. But if the hour of hope is past, I commend him to God, and would have him consider that he is passing into the Invisible, of which all his life long he has been desirous to have a nearer view.

Ever yours most affectionately,

B. JOWETT.

*From the Master of Balliol to Lady Tennyson.*

*Dec. 24th*, 1888.

I am afraid that you must be in great anxiety but not without hope. May God strengthen and help you! I believe that the patient may at all times minister to himself if he is conscious, and that that strong frame and mind will not be easily overcome in its struggle. Give my love to him and tell him that I hope that he is at rest, knowing that we are all in the hands of God. I would have him think sometimes that no one has done more for mankind in our own time, having found expression for their noblest thoughts and having never written a line that he would wish to blot; and that this benefit, which he has conferred on the English language and people, will be an everlasting possession to them, as great as any poet has ever

given to any nation, and that those who have been his friends will always think of him with love and admiration, and speak to others of the honour of having known him. He who has such record of life should have the comfort of it in the late years of it: there may be some things which he blames, and some which he laments, but as a whole he has led a true and noble life, and he need not trouble himself about small matters. He may be thankful for the great gift which he has received, and that he can return an account of it. It seems to me that he may naturally dwell on such thoughts at this time, although also, like a Christian, feeling that he is an unprofitable servant, and that he trusts only in the mercy of God.

Ever yours affectionately,

B. JOWETT.

## 1889.

### *From Robert Browning.*

29 DE VERE GARDENS, W.
*January*, 1889.

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

I was at Venice when the first news of your illness reached me, and I hardly know how I could resist so long the impulse I at last gave way to, that of inquiring directly how you are. Probably it came of needing only to know this more exactly than was possible by the indirect means in my power, for as to any object beyond it, I know that, being what you are, there is no need to put in evidence the thorough love that I have always had for yourself, no less than my absolute admiration of your work. The circumstances of life never seemed to permit me a neighbourhood, and intercourse, which would have been a more valued honour and gratifying privilege than, with one exception, ever befell me, still I could have taken observation of the star beyond an actual reach which would have made me happy indeed: all which, I repeat, you know and must have long known; and it is only now that I trouble you with the telling, because the last accounts I have heard of your condition are favourable, and one's breath naturally ceases to be held when the danger is, if God please, over: and mine relieves itself, and you will forgive if it in any way importunes you: that it should

not do so is all I desire. I am sure my dear Hallam will let me know what he can, and give me what satisfaction he can: you shall merely tell him to tell me that you understand I mean well in saying thus much, little in comparison with what I might say. I shall ask also of his kindness that he adds a word concerning his mother, to whom belong my affection of old date, and my profoundest sympathy at the present time.

God bless you, my dear Tennyson.

ROBERT BROWNING.

*Jan. 13th.* Jowett told a story of Dan O'Connell, whom he had heard speaking on a steamboat. A man cried out, interrupting his speech: "I know you, Dan." Dan answered, "Now I will tell you a story. A friend of mine was walking down Merrion Street. A man came up to him and said, 'I know you.' My friend looked him in the face and replied, 'O yes, you're the man, aren't you, whom I defended on a charge of petty larceny.'" The man tried to interrupt again, but O'Connell after this always squashed him by saying, "O that's only petty larceny." Jowett and my father then talked of the Land League and of agrarian murders, and my father spoke of a murder that had happened in his childhood in Lincolnshire. A wild creature, Mad Bess, used to leap the dykes with a jumping pole, and was murdered by a labourer, who dug his way into her mud cottage, for the sake of 3*s.* 6*d.* that he had heard was hidden there.

*Jan. 15th.* My father asked Jowett whether his faith in God was more earnest than it had been. He answered, "Yes, certainly." He read my father the fine comparison between the philosopher and the lawyer in the *Theætetus*. My father said that he admired the skill of the *Timæus* dialogue, and often felt inclined to agree with Plato about the Demiurge, but that this would only put the difficulty one step further back.

Various prescriptions have reached him from strangers—one that burnt cork should be placed under his bed: another that a diet of snails should be tried, said by the country people here to be good for rheumatism.

*Jan. 27th and 28th.* We carried him down for the first time to the drawing-room. He was much struck with the beauty of the lights in the landscape and said, "This is certainly a very pretty place." Read Bret Harte's "Cressy."

*Jan. 29th.* Read *The Vision of Er*. He pitied Ardiæus and

said, "That is eternal hell which I do not believe." I read to him some of Book II. of *The Republic.*

*February.* He had been making his poem "By an Evolutionist" between his attacks. Throughout the winter he fed the thrushes and other birds as usual out of his window. Towards the end of this month he sat in his kitchen-garden summer-house, listening attentively to the different notes of the thrush, and finishing his song of "The Throstle[1]": which had been begun in the same garden years ago.

Summer is coming, is coming, my dear,
And all the winters are hidden.

Talking of hopefulness he said, "Hope is the kiss of the future."

*March.* To my father's delight several crossbills were seen in our park. The fact was mentioned to the Duke of Argyll, who wrote in answer:

INVERARY, *March 4th,* 1889.

How your last letter did make me envious! 1000 crossbills! Not since 1837, when I was a boy, have I seen a flight of crossbills. In that year there was an enormous crop of cones on all the spruce firs. I was then living on the Clyde near *Roseneath,* where there was a famous wood of spruce, tall forest trees, 100 feet high. The tops were all loaded with cones. Unheard of before, a flight of crossbills appeared and fed on the cones. I used to cross a ferry often to shoot specimens, and it was not easy to kill them at such a height. The cocks were all *scarlet* with a few yellow feathers mixed with the scarlet. The hens were a dull brown with a little yellow. Never since that year have I seen the bird, except perhaps once at Balmoral: of that I was not sure. The habits are most curious. They cling head downwards like parrots to the cone, insert the bill between the scales, and then wrench them open by a side movement of the crossing pointed mandibles. A fresh spruce cone is a very tough affair. Yet the birds made mincemeat of them and the remains strewed the ground below the trees.

Yours affectionately, ARGYLL.

[1] Printed in *New Review,* October, 1891.

*March 14th.* My father was astonished at the "living fingers of the cedar." "They look alive" he said.

He was pleased with the Press being called by someone "The whispering gallery of the world."

Father Haythornethwaite told him a story which amused him, and he retold it to me. "Father Haythornethwaite had an interview with a job-gardener. The gardener said to him, 'That Shakespeare's a great poet, isn't he?' (Haythornethwaite) 'Yes.' (Gardener) 'And this Tennyson's a great poet, isn't he?' Haythornethwaite was kind enough to say 'Yes.' (Gardener) driving his spade into the clod, 'Then I don't think nothink o' neither of 'em.'"

*March 21st.* He was able to see Lady Rosebery, who lunched with us, and he praised her husband's feeling for the empire. He spoke with enthusiasm about Challemel-Lacour's noble speech last December against the extreme danger of government by Opportunism.

*April 17th.* He availed himself of the gleams of sunshine and sat in his summer-house in Maiden's Croft. As the spring came on, "the girlhood of the year" he called it, he grew much better, and was delighted with the primroses, cowslips, and the "ruddy-hearted blossom-flake" of the elm, and the turtle-doves "purring" in the garden.

When Sir Andrew Clark visited him for the last time in this illness, it was in spite of a summons from the Shah, to which Sir Andrew had replied that he could not obey His Majesty, as he had promised to visit his old friend the old poet. This struck the Shah so much that, far from being offended, he took a noble view, and, as a mark of signal honour to the great Hakim, gave him the order of "The Lion and the Sun."

Sir Andrew pronounced my father (although he had been as near death as a man could be without dying) perfectly recovered, quite healthy and sound, adding that he "could not see where the door would open for his exit from this life."

On May 21st Lord Brassey kindly lent us his famous yacht, the *Sunbeam.* Mr Andrew Hichens, my father and myself cruised in her down Channel to Dartmouth, Plymouth and Salcombe. During our cruise my father drew upon his wonderful memory for some of his endless stories:

Of his once telling a friend at a tavern-dinner about Dr Cumming having taken a house for twenty-one years, although

Dr Cumming had prophesied the end of the world in ten years, and of a waiter rushing forward, napkin on arm, and saying in a state of intense excitement: "Is that true, Sir? You have comforted me wonderfully, for I am a family man, and I did not see the use of my being waiter any longer at taverns, if the world was to end so soon."

Of an American clergyman, who wrote to assure him that he had once by an uncontrollable impulse recited "The Charge of the Light Brigade" in his pulpit instead of preaching a sermon, to the great scandal and indignation of his congregation. Some days later a man called on him and said, "Sir, I am one of the survivors of the Balaclava charge. I have led a wild, bad life, and haven't been near a church, till by accident and from curiosity I went into your church last Sunday. I heard you recite that great poem and it has changed my life: I shall never disgrace my cloth again." "So," said the clergyman, "though I may have lost my congregation, I have saved a soul by your poem."

Of a farmer, who saw a painting by Lady Margaret Majendie, of the Tennyson arms, the supporters being two leopards; and who said, "Why, I thought only one leper returned to give glory to the *Lord*."

Of his father, urging him to try for the Cambridge Prize Poem although it was looked upon with the greatest contempt. Of the turning of an old poem on "Armageddon" into "Timbuctoo" by a little alteration of the beginning and the end, and of his utter astonishment when this poem won the medal.

Of Hallam (the historian) saying to him, "I have tried to read Carlyle's *French Revolution* but cannot get on, the style is so abominable." Of Carlyle groaning about Hallam's *Constitutional History*, "Eh! it's a miserable skeleton of a book."

Of X—, dining at an Irish inn (where a club was in the habit of holding convivial meetings), when a mouse ran out of the wainscot and played about his foot: upon which he went down on his knees to look at it. Meanwhile the waiter popped his head in at the door, and, seeing X— with eyes intent on the mouse, shouted: "It is a real mouse, your honour, it isn't *delirium tremens*."

Of Aubrey de Vere giving his view of eternal punishment: "Of course it will be listening to Huxley and Tyndall disputing eternally on the non-existence of God."

Of Lowell asserting: "Wordsworth was no more an 'artist' than Isaiah"; whereupon my father answered: "I consider Isaiah a very great artist—everything he says is complete and perfect."

## *Letters to and from friends*, 1889.

### *To the Rt. Hon. W. E. Gladstone.*

FARRINGFORD,
*June 17th*, 1889.

MY DEAR GLADSTONE,

I must write, tho' by another hand, something of my own warm thanks for all your kindly words. Better I certainly am as far as rheumatic gout goes, but it has left a good deal that is very trying to me, body and mind. However enough of this. The papers told much of your continued ovation in the West, and yesterday Mrs Elliot Yorke and her brother-in-law told more. We do not wonder at your feeling of exhaustion just now, but, when this is past, it will be a lasting pleasure to know that the people of England are not ungrateful for all you have done for them in days that are no more. I wish you could have looked in upon us here. The companionship of former years is, I need not say, a grateful memory to me. When you have resumed the old work, I hope you will find yourself renewed by the little voyage. Lord Brassey did all for me in his floating palace that princely munificence and friendly kindness could do, and with good result to my strength, tho' brought very low by a nine months' illness. Kindest remembrances from us all to Mrs Gladstone and yourself.

Believe me yours ever,

TENNYSON.

## *From Miss Elizabeth Fowler.*

WINTERTON, LINCOLNSHIRE.

Two or three days ago I spent a short time with an aged cottager, Mrs "Bowskill," or "Bowskin," at Owston Ferry. She and her husband, palsied but "very bonny," live in an old wood-yard there, close by the Trent.

They and their "fore-elders" have been on the premises for 150 years.

This old lady always reads and asks about anything relating to "Master Alfred," who "used to come to visit at Dalby Hall[1]," near Langton, when she was in service there. "He used to *study* in an evening;—when I was sent with candles for him into another room. And he always was patikler, very, to say 'Thank you'; but you see, Miss, all that was before I knew that he *was tryin' for to be a poet.*"

The old man would not leave the cottage "on any account," and as he looked enquiringly, not hearing his wife's talk on the other side of the fire, she raised her voice and said, "I'm telling the ladies how that thou clings to the old yard." "Ay," he said laughingly.

The vicar's daughter had taken them some soup, and the old lady stood washing and drying the jug as she first began to talk.

I wonder if I may be forgiven for telling at this time of a clergyman's sister some years ago who read "Locksley Hall" to a poor woman at her own special request. This was in "The Marsh." The old lady sat knitting until the visitor came to the words,

> Here about the beach I wander'd, nourishing a youth sublime,

when she laid down her hands, picturing the sand-hills, and ejaculated: "Nay, Miss, don't you believe a word o' that; for there's nothing to nourish *no*body here, be out it was a rabbit. An' its very rare you can get *that*!"

[1] His aunt Mrs Bourne's.

## *Extract of letter from Aubrey de Vere to Hallam Tennyson.*

1889.

I paid my annual visit to Cardinal Newman, sleeping one night at the Oratory. I found him considerably weaker than last year in his body but strong and clear in his mind. He is now 89. He looks forward to his end with a very bright and peaceful though humble Hope, equally unlike the coldness of the Sceptic or Stoic, and the presumption of the Puritan enthusiast. On no face, that of man, woman, or child, have I seen a smile like his, so rich in charity, sweetness and pathos, and yet often with a gleam of humour fleeting across it. It is a strong contrast to that strange look of *intensity* into which his features more often fix themselves. His great religious change has not prevented him from being also one of the most unchanged men I ever knew. He speaks with the most ardent affection of all his old friends, grieving deeply for Lord Blachford who is thought to be very unlikely to survive long. He looks to the progress of Democracy in this country and most others, with that profound distrust of its promises and pretensions with which he always regarded what is at heart but a system of political materialism. He spoke on several religious subjects too, among others on one which interests your father so much that I wished he had been present—e.g. Eternal Punishment, respecting which he remarked that though the "Pain of *Loss*" (that of the Vision and Fruition of God) never ceased, yet *Catholic* Theology allowed of a belief entertained by many Theologians, that the "*Pœna Sensus*" does not share that Eternity, but gradually diminishes and may wholly cease, as is implied by the expression "beaten by few *stripes*." This is wholly opposed to the Calvinistic Theology, especially when combined with the teaching that the "Fire" like the "Worm" is a *figure*, that Eternity includes no sense of *Succession*, and that the gates of Heaven are always open; so that the reason that the reprobate and impenitent does not enter is because he has no love for God and *does not desire* His presence.

On his birthday, August 6th, the tributes from Swinburne[1], Lewis Morris, Alfred Austin, Theodore Watts-Dunton, P. B. Aldrich, a writer in *Punch*, and others, greatly gratified him. In the afternoon of his birthday he planted a blue Colorado pine in Aldworth garden. The following are scraps of his talk:

"The newspaper attention which poets get now-a-days would be enough to prevent a young poet putting forward any poetry at all. Most of the things said of me in the papers are lies, lies, lies." Then he referred to a letter of extravagant flattery: "This fulsome adulation makes me miserable"; and after reading a beautiful letter from Edmund Lushington: "*That* is sincerely felt, and what a contrast! I don't know what I have done to make people feel like that towards me, except that I have always kept my faith in Immortality."

He talked of his past life—of "those old homes, which, though now far away in the morning twilight, are not forgotten": and of his future work, and set about beginning the second part of "Œnone." He was very cheerful and well. By his side in the study he kept a big box full of congratulatory letters and telegrams, into which he dived at intervals while he was smoking: and on his table was a splendid bouquet of eighty roses from Princess Frederica. He was especially touched by a letter from Browning.

To-morrow is your birthday, indeed a memorable one. Let me say I associate myself with the universal pride of our country in your glory, and in its hope that for many and

[1] My father wrote to thank Mr Swinburne, who answered thus:

MY DEAR LORD TENNYSON,

Your too kind note has just reached me here. I need not say how gratified I am by it, and how grateful for so generous a recognition of so brief and inadequate a tribute, or thank-offering. It adds yet another item to a debt which has been accumulating ever since I was twelve years old.

Believe me ever gratefully yours, A. C. SWINBURNE.

many a year we may have your very self among us: secure that your poetry will be a wonder and delight to all those appointed to come after; and for my own part let me further say, I have loved you dearly. May God bless you and yours! I have had disastrous experience, if I am to believe it, that words[1] may somehow mean the very thing most abhorrent to the habitual mood of the speaker: so may be explained and excused! All I know is, at no moment from first to last of my acquaintance with your works, or friendship with yourself, have I had any other feeling expressed or kept silent than this, which an opportunity allows me to utter, that I am and ever shall be,

My dear Tennyson,

Admiringly and affectionately yours,

ROBERT BROWNING.

## *Birthday Letters to friends.*

### *To Robert Browning.*

ALDWORTH, *August*, 1889.

MY DEAR BROWNING,

I thank you with my whole heart and being for your noble and affectionate letter, and with my whole heart and being I return your friendship. To be loved and appreciated by so great and powerful a nature as yours will be a solace to me, and lighten my dark hours during the short time of life that is left to me.

Ever yours, TENNYSON.

### *To Dr Van Dyke.*

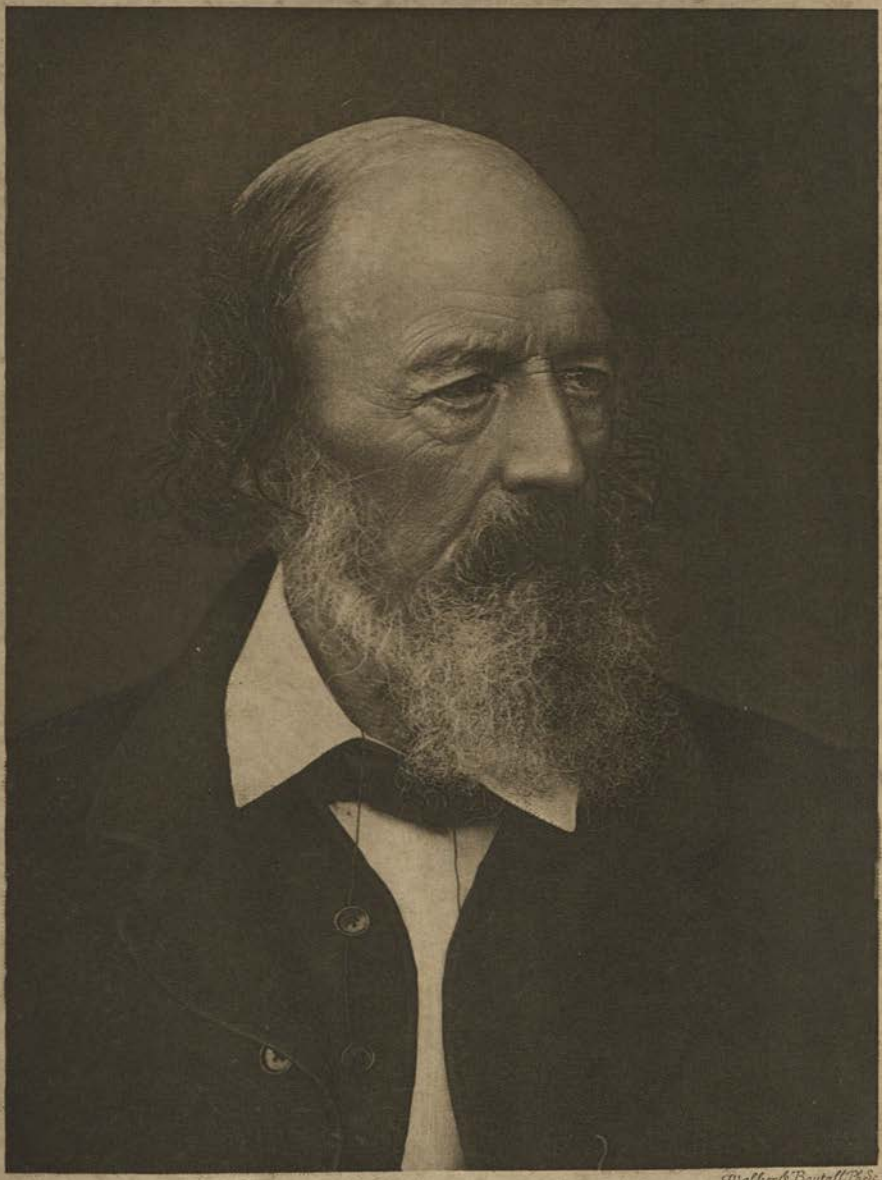
*Aug.* 19*th*, 1889.

I thank you for your kind and able articles[2], which you have sent me. That on the two "Locksley Halls"[3] is also good.

[1] Edward Fitzgerald's words about Mrs Browning's poetry.

[2] In *Scribner's Magazine*, "Tennyson's First Flight," and in the *Century Magazine*, "The Bible in Tennyson."

[3] In *Scribner's Magazine*, "The Two Locksley Halls," by T. R. Lounsbury.



Walker & Boutall Photo.

*Alfred (Lord) Tennyson*

*from the photograph by Barrauds Ltd*

I should be very ungrateful if I were not grateful for the good wishes, and warm congratulations, which have reached me on my eightieth birthday. As a general rule, however, I think it wisest in a man to do his work in the world as quietly and as well as he can, without much heeding the praise or the dispraise.

The report (which you quote) that I dislike Americans is wholly without foundation, though it is true that I have protested against the manner in which some of the American publishers have pilfered my work.

Ever yours faithfully, TENNYSON.

In answer to a letter from a correspondent who asks my father to help start a Liberal Unionist Journal, he wrote:

SIR,

I am heart and soul a Unionist, but I confess that I think public opinion much more likely to be influenced by steady firm action than by much talking and writing.

At all events I live too apart from the world to feel justified in availing myself of the offer you are good enough to make me of being one of your hundred.

Believe me faithfully yours,

TENNYSON.

*To the Hon. Sir Henry Parkes, K.C.M.G.*

ALDWORTH, HASLEMERE,
*September*, 1889.

MY DEAR SIR HENRY,

I rejoice in your speech and your letter, and your remembrance of me. I have received innumerable congratulations on my eightieth birthday in the shape of

telegrams, letters and poems, but none are more valued by me than your greeting from the Antipodes. I was obliged to advertise in the *Times* that I could not answer all my friends known and unknown, except thro' the medium of the newspaper, and indeed my doctor had told me that I was not to write letters for the present; for perhaps you may not be aware that I have had nine months of rheumatic gout, which he said would have made an end of most men at my age, but I answer you, however briefly, to show you that I have not forgotten your visits to me, and that I am

Always yours, TENNYSON.

# CHAPTER XX.

## "DEMETER AND OTHER POEMS." NOTES BY MY FATHER.

1889–90.

*Death of Browning, Long walks, Novels, Subjects for poems, Letters and Journals* (1889–90).

*"In the evening-tide there shall be light."*

*Demeter and other Poems* appeared in Dec. 1889.

The general tone of criticism was gratifying, and to the effect that the poems were wonderful productions for a man of fourscore years, that they were especially remarkable for rhythm and strength, and close-packed diction, and that there was throughout a trustful peace and resignation in the evening of life, which touched the heart of the "great public."

In this year also had been published by Boussod Valadon and Co. the three poems "To Edward Lear," "The Daisy," and "The Palace of Art," illustrated by Edward Lear. The publisher accepted the book on condition that "one hundred copies were signed by Lord Tennyson"; and much as he disliked signing his name, he signed it in affectionate memory of his old friend.

Napier's *Homes and Haunts of Tennyson* (privately printed this year), and Alfred Church's *Laureate's Country*, published 1891, were the only two topo-

graphical books concerning him which he considered at all correct.

Very few MS notes have been left on *Demeter and other Poems.* The volume was dedicated to Lord Dufferin, as a tribute of affection and of gratitude; for words would fail me to tell the unremitting kindness shown by himself and Lady Dufferin to my brother Lionel, during his fatal illness.

The poem from which the book was named was written at my request, because I knew that he considered Demeter one of the most beautiful types of motherhood. He said, "I will write it, but when I write an antique like this I must put it into a frame—something modern about it. It is no use giving a mere *réchauffé* of old legends." He would give as an example of the "frame" the passage:

Yet I, Earth-Goddess, am but ill-content
* * * * * * *
And all the Shadow die into the Light.

"In a review," wrote my father, "of the Lincolnshire Poems it was remarked that I must have found these poems difficult to accomplish as being out of my way. I wrote to a friend that they were easy enough, for I knew the men, by which I meant the kind of men and their manner of speaking, not that my poems represented individuals whom I knew."

"A lady tells me that when she read 'The Northern Cobbler' at a village entertainment, the drunkard of the village, on her coming to the line,

An' I looök'd cock-eyed at my noäse an' I seeäd 'im a-gittin' o' fire,

left the room, saying, 'Women knoäws too much now-a-daäy.'"

About "The Ring" my father notes: "Mr Lowell told me this legend, or something like it, of a house near where he had once lived."

In answer to a letter respecting the legend Mr Lowell writes:

I shall only be too glad to be in any the remotest way the moving cause of a new poem by one to whom we are all so nobly indebted.

Henry James, by the way, to whom I told the legend many years ago, made it the subject of a short story. But this would be no objection, for the poet would make it his own by right of eminent domain.

The following lines my father would quote as giving his own belief that "the after-life is one of progress":

The Voices of the day
Are heard across the Voices of the dark.
No sudden heaven, nor sudden hell, for man,
But thro' the Will of One who knows and rules—
And utter knowledge is but utter love—
Æonian Evolution, swift or slow,
Thro' all the Spheres—an ever opening height,
An ever lessening earth.

"Happy" was suggested by a quotation in the *Isle of Wight County Press* from an archæological letter, written by the Reverend Bourchier James:

"At first there was a doubt whether wives should follow (into solitude) their husbands who were leprous, or remain in the world and marry again. The Church decided that the marriage tie was indissoluble. With a love stronger than this living death, lepers were followed into banishment from the haunts of men by their faithful wives."

Of "Merlin and the Gleam," written in August, 1889, he says: "In the story of 'Merlin and Nimue' I have read that Nimue means the Gleam,—which signifies in my poem the higher poetic imagination. Verse IV is the early imagination, Verse V alludes to the Pastorals."

Of "Romney's Remorse" he notes: "Edward Fitzgerald said in a letter, 'I read Hayley's *Life of Romney* the other day: Romney wanted but education and reading to make him a very fine painter; but his ideal was not high and fine. How touching is the close of his life! He married at nineteen, and because Sir Joshua and others had said that marriage 'spoilt an artist,' almost immediately left his wife in the North and never saw her till the end of his life; when old, nearly mad, and quite desolate, he went back to her and she received him and nursed him till he died. This quiet act of hers is worth all Romney's pictures, even as a matter of art, I am sure.'"

"Far—far—away," and "The Oak," are two poems in this volume which he liked.

> What sound was dearest in his native dells?
> The mellow lin-lan-lone of evening bells
> Far—far—away.

Distant bells always charmed him with their "lin-lan-lone," and, when heard over the sea or a lake, he was never tired of listening to them.

"The Oak," he thought, might be called "clean cut like a Greek epigram. The allusion is to the gold of the young oak leaves in spring, and to the autumnal gold of the fading leaves."

"Crossing the Bar" was written in my father's eighty-first year, on a day in October when we came from Aldworth to Farringford. Before reaching Farringford he had the Moaning of the Bar in his mind, and after dinner he showed me this poem written out.

I said, "That is the crown of your life's work." He answered, "It came in a moment." He explained the "Pilot" as "That Divine and Unseen Who is always guiding us."

A few days before my father's death he said to me: "Mind you put 'Crossing the Bar' at the end of all editions of my poems[1]."

---

I give two of the many letters which he received relative to the volume:

HAWARDEN CASTLE,
*Dec. 14th*, 1889.

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

How kind of you to send me your new volume! I have lost no time in reading it, and I am, if not surprised, yet greatly pleased to find you still equal to new manifestations of power such as it contains.

Only I am not ready to part from the *Iliad* on any terms, not even on the condition of meeting its author. Your "lightning may shrivel[2], etc." is the grand expression of what I meanly spoke at Kirkwall as to your vocation and mine.

[1] My father considered Edmund Lushington's translation into Greek of "Crossing the Bar," one of the finest translations he had ever read:

Ἅλιος δέδυκε, λέλαμπεν ἀστὴρ
ἕσπερος, λαμπρά με καλεῖ τις ὀμφά·
μηδ' ἁλὸς βαρύστονος ἦχος εἴη
εὖτ' ἂν ἀπέλθω,
ῥεῦμα δ' οἷον ἦκα καθεῦδον ἕρποι
νόσφιν ἀφλοισμοῦ κελάδου τε πλήθον,
ἄδ' ἀποῤῥοὰ βαθέων ἀπείρων
ὅκκ' ἀνακάμψῃ
οἴκαδ' αὖτις. Ἀμφιλύκα κνεφαῖον
νὺξ φέρει κώδωνα, τὰ δ' ἔνθεν ὄρφνα·
μηδὲ πενθήρης τις ὀδυρμὸς εἴη
ναυστολέοντος,
τῆλε μὲν χρόνου τε τόπου τ' ἄπουρον
τῆλε πλημμυρὸν πέλαγός μ' ἀπάξει,
ἔλπομαι δ' εἰς ὦπα πέραν κυβερνα-
τῆρος ἀθρήσειν.

[2] "Parnassus."

The death of Browning on the day of the appearance of your volume, and as we hear of one of his own, is a touching event. I was full of fear on seeing the word bronchitis. I hope you have no leanings that way. Requiescat in Pace. Wish for me, I pray you, a speedy deliverance, if God's will may so be, from the life of turmoil and contention which I have pursued for fifty-seven years and part of a fifty-eighth.

With our united love...

W. E. GLADSTONE.

*Dec. 26th*, 1889.

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

Accept my best thanks for your very kind present of "Demeter." I have not had a Christmas Box I valued so much for many a long year. I envy your vigour, and am ashamed of myself beside you for being turned out to grass. I kick up my heels now and then and have a gallop round the paddock, but it does not come to much. With best wishes to you, and, if Lady Tennyson has not forgotten me altogether, to her also,

Believe me yours very faithfully,

T. H. HUXLEY.

In December my father sent these lines to Bishop Westcott of Durham with reference to the strikes among the miners in the North of England, in return for a request for an autograph:

Well roars the storm to those who hear
A deeper voice across the storm.

The Bishop was hopeful as to the situation; but my father was sorely afraid of these continuous coal-strikes, that they might in the end have the effect of permanently increasing the price of coal for the poor labourer; of diminishing the numerous industries which depend on coal, and which support multitudes of hard-working men; and of eventually driving our gigantic coal-trade altogether

out of England, and thus bringing wholesale ruin on the country[1].

## 1890.

Robert Browning's death, in December 1889, greatly distressed my father, who telegraphed to his son, "We deeply sympathize with you. The world has had a great loss and ourselves in particular." I was in London at the time and my mother wrote to me: "Browning has been so nobly free from envy, so loving and appreciative that one cannot but mourn his loss as a friend; and as a poet one feels that one has lost a deep mine of great thoughts, and pure feelings, and much else besides."

The death too of the Irish poet William Allingham took away from us yet another friend. My father often repeated Allingham's last words: "I see such things as you cannot dream of."

This winter my father amused himself by making water-colour sketches. Watts had urged him to do this and sent him the advice to "add a daub every day," saying he "would then soon have a picture." He was interested in every form of art and of craft, and at this time placed round the windows of a cottage at Farringford bricks moulded from a wreath of ivy leaves, which he had carved in apple-tree wood.

On April 21st my mother wrote to Mr Palgrave: "He has been entertaining large five o'clock tea-parties for the last three or four weeks, almost daily, and has often been even able to read to them. He has walked an hour and a half or two hours before luncheon, many days, between Mr Arthur Coleridge and Dr Stanford, all three telling merry stories; and at luncheon and at

[1] See p. 382.

dinner his spirits did not fail with others, though now he is beginning to be weary of the many people."

His walks were still generally along his Downs from Watcombe Bay by the Beacon towards the thymy promontory that towers above the Needles[1]. The views of sea and cliff, the gloom and glory over the waters on either hand, were a perpetual delight to him. He often wondered why the distant sunlight on the sea as seen from the Beacon was so "amber": and would marvel at the

> dead claps of thunder from within the cliffs,
> Heard thro' the living roar.

The birds that made their homes on the chalk ledges, the peregrine falcons, the ravens with their "iron knell," the kestrels, the carrion-crows, the different kinds of sea-bird, from the cormorants drying themselves on the pinnacles of rock in heraldic attitudes to the sea-gull sunning himself among the tufts of samphire and of thrift, were ever a fresh interest. A special corner, that he liked above all, was a platform of cliff over Scratchell's Bay looking up to a dazzling white precipice, seen far away by the ships at sea, and which he named Taliessin, or the "splendid brow." At other times he would wander at low-tide among the green rock-pools on the shore, and curiously examine the "branching sea-weed" and the brilliant sea-anemones; or, when high-tide coincided with sunset, would watch the great waves flinging their "rosy veil of spray" behind them and "shouldering the sun." Whenever I look at the sea at Freshwater, I remember passages from his poems which he made as he was walking or sailing there, such as

> The scream of a madden'd beach dragg'd down by the wave:

[1] The doctors had said, when my father was ill, that he would probably never again have the use of his limbs or be able to move from the sofa. But his great natural strength did not fail him.

and

> a full tide
> Rose with ground-swell, which, on the foremost rocks
> Touching, up-jetted in spirts of wild sea-smoke
> And scaled in sheets of wasteful foam, and fell
> In vast sea-cataracts:

and

> For sure no gladlier does the stranded wreck
> See thro' the gray skirts of a lifting squall
> The boat that bears the hope of life approach
> To save the life despair'd of, than he saw
> Death dawning on him, and the close of all.

He read many novels after his evening's work, and among others he looked through *Henrietta Temple* again. He had told Disraeli that the "silly sooth" of love was given perfectly there. *Lothair* he did not admire, "altho' it was written to stir up the English gentry and nobility to be leaders of the people." To this end Disraeli had shown them as a handsome set of fellows who did nothing, but who had in them the stuff to be leaders of men if they would only exert themselves. It is interesting that Disraeli in later life expressed himself cordially about my father's poems, though earlier he had depreciated them in comparison with Byron's. My father in turn approved of "Disraeli's feeling for the true unity of our empire."

He would always talk of Thackeray's novels, *Esmond*, *Pendennis*, and *The Newcomes* as being "delicious: they are so mature. But now the days are so full of false sentiment that, as Thackeray said, one cannot draw a man as he should be." He would read and re-read them as well as Walter Scott's and Miss Austen's novels. His comments on Walter Scott and Miss Austen were:

"Scott is the most chivalrous literary figure of this century, and the author with the widest range since Shakespeare. I think *Old Mortality* is his greatest novel. The realism and life-likeness of Miss Austen's Dramatis Personæ come nearest to those of Shakespeare. Shakespeare however is a sun to which Jane Austen, tho' a bright and true little world, is but an asteroid."

Of *Clarissa Harlowe* he would say: "I like those great *still* books," and "I wish there were a great novel in hundreds of volumes that I might go on and on; I hate some of your modern novels with numberless characters thrust into the first chapter and nothing but modern society talk; and also those morbid, and introspective tales, with their oceans of sham philosophy. To read these last is like wading through glue."

In respect of contemporary novels he had a very catholic taste. Latterly he read Stevenson and George Meredith with great interest: also Walter Besant, Black, Hardy, Henry James, Marion Crawford, Anstey, Barrie, Blackmore, Conan Doyle, Miss Braddon, Miss Lawless, Ouida, Miss Broughton, Lady Margaret Majendie, Hall Caine, and Shorthouse. He liked Edna Lyall's *Autobiography of a Slander*, and the *Geier-Wally* by Wilhelmina von Hillern; and often gave his friends *Surly Tim* to read, for its "concentrated pathos." "Mrs Oliphant's prolific work," he would observe, "is amazing, and she is nearly always worth reading."

Various subjects for poems were suggested to him. The Master of Balliol urged him to write on the "Happiness of Old Age," or on the idea that "All religions are one," or on "The religions of all good men."

My father would have liked to make a poem of one of those great Egyptian legends, which describe how despair and death came upon him who was mad enough to try and probe the secret of the Universe; and he thought of

weaving into a great stage drama the legend of "Tristram of Lyonnesse," as he had been obliged to cut it down to suit his treatment of the "Idylls of the King."

This narrative from the *Spectator*, given him by the Bishop of Ripon (Boyd Carpenter), he felt was a noble theme, and he laid it aside for future use:

In December last, the American ship "*Cleopatra*" was descried by Captain Hughes of the Liverpool steamer "*Lord Gough*," near the St George's Shoal, with her colours at half-mast and evidently sinking. The gale and the sea were so terrible that it seemed madness to help her; but volunteers came forward, and a boat was manned, when suddenly, the colours were hauled down. Captain Hughes however persevered, the desperate adventure succeeded, and the crew of the "*Cleopatra*" was saved.

The United States Government forwarded thanks and rewards to Captain Hughes and his men; but noble as their conduct was, Captain Pendleton of the "*Cleopatra*" had done a nobler thing. He was asked why his colours were hauled down, and replied, "Because we had no boats, and thought it wrong to imperil other lives in a hopeless attempt." The "*Cleopatra*" was then water-logged, and Captain Pendleton and his men faced the certainty of death by drowning rather than tempt others, strangers, into danger.

Honour to the name of the brave! That deed on the "*Cleopatra*" is equal to the conduct of the soldiers on the "*Birkenhead*," and should live like it in song.

Of the Bishop he had seen a good deal in late years and he talked freely with him as a sympathetic companion.

During one of the Bishop's last visits my father said to him: "Looked at from one point of view I can understand the Persian dualism; there is much which looks like the conflict of the powers of light and darkness." When the Bishop said that he thought this might be found in the word *education*, he said "Yes," and he repeated the lines:

The Lord let the house of a brute to the soul of a man,
And the man said "Am I your debtor?"
And the Lord—"Not yet: but make it as clean as you can,
And then I will let you a better."

"It is hard," he said, "to believe in God; but it is harder not to believe. I believe in God, not from what I see in Nature, but from what I find in man."

## *Letters from friends*, 1890.

### *From Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

*Feb. 2nd*, 1890.

I had great pleasure in reading your last volume of poems, and I thank you very heartily for sending me a copy. All the world honours and praises you, and I am a part of that world. But besides that I am interested in you for one reason which very few others can assign. I had the honour of following you into atmospheric existence at an interval of only twenty-three days, having been born on the twenty-ninth of August 1809. I am proud of my birth-year and humbled when I think of who were and who are my coevals, Darwin the destroyer and creator, Lord Houghton the pleasant and kindhearted lover of men of letters, Gladstone whom I leave it to you to characterise, but whose vast range of intellectual powers few will question, Mendelssohn, whose music still rings in our ears, and the Laureate whose "jewels five words long"—and many of them a good deal longer—sparkle in our memories and will shine till

"Universal darkness buries all."

I said I feel proud to be even accidentally associated with such a group. But I said also that I feel humbled: perhaps I ought to feel nothing about it, as the world at large is not very deeply interested in the fact of my finding myself introduced into life in such good company. I might have spared you this letter, which possibly your son or your secretary may read to you, but I could not feel easy until I had thanked you for the welcome little

volume, and assured you that I have never forgotten the kindness with which you received my dear daughter, with me now only in memory, and myself. With grateful remembrances and the hope that you may live many more years and sing many more songs,

I am, my dear Lord Tennyson,

Very truly yours,

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

## *From the Duke of Argyll to Lady Tennyson.*

*Feb. 28th*, 1890.

I have not been bothering you by letters and telegrams because I saw the daily report in the paper—with what anxiety I am sure I need not tell you. I do trust soon to hear that he has weathered this new storm. Will you tell him—it may amuse him—that his beautiful line in the last verses on "Spring,"

Wavers on her thin stem the snowdrop cold
That trembles not to kisses of the bee,

is true to nature *except* at Inverary? We had, last Monday, an extraordinary hot sun, great calm, and a sudden awakening of the *hives*. Out they came, and our snowdrop crop being still in full force the bees were all rushing to the snowdrops and for the first time in my life, sitting in the garden, I saw the bees all round my seat making the "thin stems" waver and tremble to their kisses! But his observation is none the less true of the ordinary cycle of the season and of its flowers.

# CHAPTER XXI.

## OLD FRIENDS AND NEW POEMS.

### *My Journal.*

### 1890–91.

A sudden attack of influenza had made my father ill again. Despite his growing weakness, his interest in the larger politics of the country never failed. Thus at his wish I read the new Tithes Bill to him, and he admired the courage of the graduated property tax in Victoria, saying that a modified tax of the same nature would soon have to be passed in England. He was much touched by an account of Mrs Moberly's (the wife of the late Bishop of Salisbury) being greatly comforted by "Crossing the Bar," when she was dying.

*March 7th.* He was pleased with Sir Henry Parkes' Dedication of his poems. He looked forward to Australian Federation as a prelude to Imperial Federation.

*March 8th.* He made me read Southwell's "Burning Babe" to him out of Palgrave's *Sacred Song.* Talked then of St Athanasius, who, as a boy, baptized his fellows in the sea; and remarked that the ceremony was at once treated by Bishop Alexander as valid. He added: "How much these old fellows believed in the divine nature of childhood!"

*March 11th.* Dined downstairs; told of his having addressed the boys at Louth School, in the person of his uncle Charles Tennyson, M.P. for Stamford, in a long and comic speech: and of his hating Louth School so much, that he would not go down the lane where it was, when in later life he was at Louth.

*March 15th.* My father quoted Goethe's "Kennst du das

Land?" and "Wer nie sein Brod" at dinner, admiring them greatly. He said he thought that seven of his own best songs (of the deeper kind) were "All along the Valley," "Courage, poor Heart of Stone," "Break, Break, Break," "The Bugle Song," "Ask me no more," "Tears, Idle Tears," and "Crossing the Bar."

*March 16th.* Talked about my brother Lionel, this being his birthday; and of the after-life being the cardinal part of Christ's teaching; and of *The Messiah*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, and *Paradise Lost*, as the three greatest religious works produced in England.

*March 17th.* He had all but recovered from his influenza, and sat in the sun in front of the study window, and read Jebb's *Homer:* quoted "Virtus repulsæ nescia sordidæ," and dwelt on the stateliness imparted by Horace to the Alcaic stanza.

*March 20th.* Said in the evening: "Love is the highest we feel, therefore we must believe that 'God is Love.' We cannot but believe that the creation is infinite, if God is infinite."

*April.* Miss Mary Anderson is to be married, so cannot act in "Robin Hood." My father said he was fond of Sherwood Forest, "the oaks with the bark of their trunks in waves like the flowing of the tides, each branch a grove," standing in the broad green glades. Then the talk touched on Rousseau.

My father went on to say he told Wordsworth that balloons would perhaps be fixed at the bottom of high mountains so as to take people to the top to see the views. Wordsworth grunted, thinking this a sacrilege.

In April Peter Bayne wrote:

A serious flaw has been allowed by you to remain in one of your masterpieces, in quality if not in size. When Lady Clare's nurse tells her that she is her own child, she, Lady Clare, uses in reply the words, "If I'm a beggar born." The criticism of my *heart* tells me that Lady Clare could never have said that.

I may mention also, though this is a matter of much less consequence, that the *one* word in "Sir Galahad" that seems to me to jar with the saintly and solemn atmosphere of the poem is the epithet "magic" applied to the boat that Galahad found.

My father answered:

*April 29th*, 1890.

MY DEAR SIR,

You make no allowance for the shock of the fall from being Lady Clare to finding herself the child of a nurse. She speaks besides not without a certain anger. "Peasant-born" would be tame and passionless. "Magic" includes "mystic."

Yours very truly, TENNYSON.

"Beggar-born." She is not calling her mother a beggar but thinking of Lord Ronald: "I that have nothing have kept him out of his own."

He also wrote to the daughter of the German poet Freiligrath:

FARRINGFORD,
*May 1st*, 1890.

MADAM,

I thank you for your translation of my "Snowdrop." It seems to me very good, tho' I do not profess to be a judge of German verse. I remember your father the poet with affection and regret.

Very truly yours,

TENNYSON.

*May 28th.* G. F. Watts left to-day, having done a fine portrait of my father (now in the Hall of Trinity). He was amused by Watts telling him that Carlyle had said that Watts had painted him like a mad labourer. At the request of Watts, my father read the "Ode on the Duke of Wellington."

He told Watts of my mother's dream after that ode was written. The Duke, she dreamt, called upon them, and as he rose from the sofa to shake hands with her, she feared to take the cold hand of death, and it was instead a warm, living hand which grasped hers. I read "The Golden Bough" and the "Story of a Balaclava Hero" to Watts and my father, while the portrait was in hand.

My father said that he used to act Dryden's plays with his brothers and sisters, and that the French governess assured him he would be a fine actor some day. He repeated to us the speech "O Laius Labdacus," etc.

*June 13th.* My parents kept their 40th wedding day. He gave my mother a pretty posy of roses, rosemary and syringa, and was very merry.

To the character of Edgar in "The Promise of May" he referred in an impromptu:

> A surface man of many theories,
> And yet not true to one: whose whims were meant
> For virtue's servants, but that heart of his
> Hard, and the slave of vice; and he would weep
> For ills himself had practised on another,
> At some sad tale of wrong, and do the wrong
> He wept for, till the very wrong itself
> Had found him out.

He said that he never met Landor more than once or twice in his life, at the time when he himself was living with James Spedding, under the same roof as John Forster, 58 Lincoln's Inn Fields. Coming home about 10 o'clock one evening he saw Mr Fox, the member for Oldham, standing at the top of the doorsteps of the house. They shook hands, and he went into Forster's, where Landor had been dining. In the meantime Mr Fox had fallen down and broken his arm, and was brought into the dining-room, white from pain, and holding the injured arm with the hand of the other. Old Landor went on eloquently discoursing of Catullus and other Latin poets as if nothing particular had happened, "which seemed rather hard, but was perhaps better than utter silence."

Speaking of the original "Locksley Hall," he told us that two undergraduates were walking together some time after he himself had left Cambridge. One of the two mentioned "Tennyson." The other replied, "O do not mention that man's name. I hate him. I was the unhappy hero of 'Locksley Hall.' It is the story of my cousin's love and mine, known to all Cambridge when Mr Tennyson was there, and he put it into verse." Needless to say he had never heard either of the undergraduate or of his story. The poem was a simple invention as to place, incidents and people.

When the poem was first published Rogers observed to my father, "That was something of my case. I was fond of a girl, who was, as I thought, intellectual, and after all she married a dog and horse man, and when she passed me after her marriage she blushed, for she knew then what she had done."

*June 23rd. Aldworth.* Walked on the Common. My father is working at his Lincolnshire poem, "The Churchwarden": and laughed heartily at the humorous passages as he made them. He asserted that careful authors were good critics, only apt to give too lenient criticisms if they felt a friendliness for the man who asked for an opinion. "The ordinary critic," he said, "is so hurried now-a-days that he not unfrequently misquotes, or tears a passage from the context—misinterpreting it, and then proceeds to base a contemptuous argument on his own misquotation, or on his own misinterpretation[1]."

*June 28th.* He found some apple-blossoms and ripe strawberries and observed: "Miss Austen is not so wrong after all" (in her garden-party in *Emma*). To-day Tyndall said to him, "God and spirit I know, and matter I know; and I believe in both." And in answer to my father's profession of belief in "individual immortality" Tyndall remarked, "We may all be absorbed into the Godhead." My father said, "Suppose that He is the real person, and we are only relatively personal." He talked with Tyndall then about experiments as to the origin of life—having frequently inspected Tyndall's hermetically sealed bottles: and it interested him that Tyndall was convinced that life could not originate without life. Tyndall on leaving us said that he was glad to hear again my father's "full, deep, broad, brotherly voice."

*July 2nd. London.* My father greatly admired Burne Jones'

[1] "Tennyson was very grand on contemptuousness. It was, he said, a sure sign of intellectual littleness. Simply to despise nearly always meant not to understand. Pride and contempt were specially characteristic of barbarians. Real civilisation taught human beings to understand each other better, and must therefore lessen contempt. It is a little or immature or uneducated mind which readily despises. One who has lived only in a *coterie* despises readily. One who has travelled and knows the world in its length and breadth, respects far more views and standpoints other than his own."

Wilfrid Ward's "Talks with Tennyson," *New Review*, July, 1886.

"Laus Veneris"; and was interested by the "Briar Rose." He missed however the final picture, the going away:

> And o'er the hills and far away
> Beyond their utmost purple rim,
> Beyond the night, across the day,
> Thro' all the world she follow'd him.

In another Exhibition he liked Poynter's "Queen of Sheba," as a splendid piece of scenic painting; but the picture by Poynter that he praised most was one of two naked boys sailing boats in a cavern. After a careful inspection of Leighton's two pictures in monochrome, "The Industrial Arts as applied to Peace and War," he said, "These are the greatest works by Leighton that I have seen."

Mr Knowles asked Mr and Mrs Gladstone, Lord Acton and others, to meet him at dinner. Gladstone and my father talked of Homer and Browning.

*Aug. 6th. Aldworth.* The Duchess of Albany came to luncheon with us in honour of my father's eighty-first birthday: and thanked him for what he had written about the Duke[1]. At her request he read "Guinevere" aloud.

My father was much impressed by Martineau's book, *The Seat of Authority;* but did not like parts of it. He had admired his *Types of Ethical Theory* and *The Study of Religion.*

Farrar told him the story of St Telemachus; he was struck by the Christian regard for human life in contrast to the pagan recklessness in inflicting torture and death. In the reign of Trajan, after his victories over the Dacians, 10,000 men are said to have fought in the Colosseum. This subject he began to embody in a poem.

Another Roman story he kept in reserve for future use—that of Perpetua, the young Roman matron, with her child (born in prison) in her arms, who refused to give up her faith even at the entreaty of her father, and was eventually killed with her friend Felicitas in front of the howling mob.

*October.* Mr Norman Lockyer visited us, and he was full of talk about Egypt, the orientation of the temples, and about meteorites. He said of my father: "His mind is saturated with astronomy."

[1] See page 437.

My father sent the following letter to Sir Henry Parkes about the strikes in Australia:

MY DEAR SIR HENRY,

Against my wont I must thank you for your most kind letter. I fear that it was written in pain and depression, for yours seems to have been a most serious accident, and coming as it did in the midst of such important work, you required a strong faith to believe that all was notwithstanding well. You will be sure that we have watched the telegrams respecting you with sincere interest, and have rejoiced that the last have been encouraging as to your health. You have indeed needed a renewal of health to face the new danger of your great strikes. You Australians appear to us to have met the monster bravely. Is there no hope of arbitration by mixed tribunals, governments having first distinctly shown a bold front against any attempt at illegal intimidation?

Many thanks for the promise of your book. We are, as you say, greatly interested in all that relates to the welfare of the Empire.

Yours ever sincerely, TENNYSON.

He also wrote this stanza for an American lady, who had asked for an autograph:

Not such were those whom Freedom claims
As patriot-martyrs of her creed:
They were not slaves that names mislead,
Nor traitors that mislead by names!

At Christmas my father enjoyed the tree for the cottagers' children, saying to my wife about her baby: "Perhaps your babe will remember all these lights and this splendour in future days as if it were a memory of another life."

Talking about English schools he told an old Eton story:

"Provost Goodall and Keate were dining with William IV. The king said *sotto voce* to the doctor: 'When he,' pointing to

Goodall, 'dies, I will make you him.' Goodall overheard, and with a courtly bow retorted: 'I could not think of going anywhere before your Majesty.'"

## 1891.

With none of the publishers into whose hands circumstances had thrown my father, was the connection so uninterruptedly pleasant as with Messrs Macmillan, unless perhaps that with Mr Henry King. Alexander Macmillan's genuine enthusiasm for his authors was especially remarkable. The letter I give below refers to the purchase of the first proof-sheets of "In Memoriam" and "Maud" and the gift of them to himself.

*To G. L. Craik of Messrs Macmillan's.*

DEAR CRAIK,

I thank you and the Macmillans for your chivalrous gift. I value this more especially as showing your abhorrence of the sale of proof-sheets.

Yours gratefully, TENNYSON.

The following lines were inscribed by my father in a copy of his works to be presented by the Royal Guild of Nurses of England to Princess Louise Augusta of Schleswig-Holstein[1] on her marriage:

Take, Lady, what your loyal nurses give,
Their full God-bless-you with this book of song,
And may the life, which, heart in heart, you live
With him you love, be cloudless and be long!

During the winter he revised his poems for a new single volume edition. He walked regularly for an hour and a half on fine days, and on stormy days paced up

[1] Daughter of Princess Christian.

and down the music-room, or practised gymnastic exercises with his legs and arms. One day he was pacing up and down, somewhat disturbed by sundry ghostly noises, when he thought that he saw something fall. It turned out to be a large rough-legged buzzard which had flown in at the window, and caused all the commotion. When set at liberty, it flew to its mate, and they have since nested on our trees.

To Dr Gollancz he forwarded for his edition of *The Pearl*, an English poem of the fourteenth century, this prefatory quatrain :

> We lost you for how long a time,
> True Pearl of our poetic prime!
> We found you, and you gleam reset
> In Britain's lyric coronet.

In February he walked his three miles, uphill to the Beacon and back, with Princess Louise. He talked about Ireland and sculpture to H.R.H., and one of his sayings to her about his writing poems[1] in his old age was, "A crooked share, Madam, may make a straight furrow." The Princess described some tragic event to him and said it was "very *awful*"; he turned round to her approvingly: "I am glad, ma'am, you use that word in the right way, and know the full meaning of it: not like the people of to-day who will say 'awfully jolly,'" etc.

At eighty-two my father preserved the high spirits of youth. He would defy his friends to get up twenty times quickly from a low chair without touching it with their hands, while he was performing this feat himself, and one afternoon he had a long waltz with M——— in the ball-room.

In April the President of Magdalen, Oxford, and Mrs Warren called upon us. My father spoke of Virgil to him, saying, "Milton had evidently studied Virgil's verse."

[1] He was working at his "Bandit's Death."

Warren mentioned the "lonely word" in the "Ode to Virgil":

"All the charm of all the Muses often flowering
in a lonely word."

"Yes," my father said, and quoted "*cunctantem* ramum" in Book VI. as an instance. "In Dryden's time," he continued, "they did not understand or anyhow had forgotten how to write blank verse. Yet his paraphrase of Virgil is stronger than any of the translations. People accused Virgil of plagiarizing, but if a man made it his own there was no harm in that (look at the great poets, Shakespeare included)." He quoted Goethe's "Du bist ein Narr?" He himself had been "most absurdly accused of plagiarizing," e.g. "The moanings of the homeless sea," "moanings" from Horace, "homeless" from Shelley. "As if no one else had heard the sea moan except Horace." He quoted also out of "The Princess," "Like bottom agates in clear seas," etc., and said that he had been accused of taking it partly from Beaumont and Fletcher, and partly from Shakespeare, but that he had himself invented the simile (while bathing in Wales).

We talked about "The Cup." "Irving," my father said, "did not represent the character of Synorix rightly. Irving made him a villain, not an epicurean. Fanny Kemble's criticism was that he could not play an epicurean and so he played a villain." My father told us that he thought the *Agamemnon*, the *Prometheus* and the *Œdipus Coloneus* the finest of the Greek plays, adding, "Fitzgerald's version of the *Agamemnon* is most remarkable."

Mrs Richard Ward, who had joined us, wanted her little boy to hear my father read. My father answered, "I will only read you something old." He read the "Ode on the Duke of Wellington." He dwelt long on the final

words, letting them ring so to speak, especially "*toll'd, Boom.*" At the end he said, "It is a great roll of words, the music of words. For a hundred people who can sing a song, there are not ten who can read a poem. People do not understand the music of words." He then read the little Dedication to "Œnone," then the poem. He explained the story, pausing from time to time, asking a few questions, and saying he considered it even more strictly classical in form and language than the old "Œnone." Then he went to walk up and down the music-room, the weather being wet. He observed: "X— has said that Tennyson told him that 'Horace and Keats were his two masters.' X— must have misunderstood." He did not care for Horace at all until after he was thirty. He had said, "Horace and Keats are masters." After the *Poems by Two Brothers* he did not think he had taken anyone for master.

He was dominated by Byron till he was seventeen, when he put him away altogether[1].

*Dulverton, "Akbar," "The Foresters."*

My father spoke at this time warmly of the gallant spirit of Sir Edward Reed's lines on the Fleet in the *St James' Gazette;* and said he liked much of Wallace's *Darwinism,* which he was reading. He talked of finishing the following little playful poem to Aubrey de Vere, and of alluding in a second verse to his youngest grandson, Alfred Aubrey; but this second verse was never written:

Little Aubrey in the West! little Alfred in the East
Accepts the songs you gave, and he sends you his Salaam;
And he prays that you may live. But as Earth her orbit runs,

[1] For most of the account of what my father said at this interview I am indebted to the President of Magdalen.

Little Homer, little Dante, little Shakespeare, can they last
In the vast
Of the rolling of the æons, of the changes of the suns?
Little poet, hear the little poet's epigram!

In June Colonel Crozier lent us his yacht, the *Assegai*, and we went to Exmouth, and thence by rail to Dulverton, "a land of bubbling streams" my father called it. Lord Carnarvon had told him years ago that the streams here were the most delicious he knew.

We drove up the Haddon valley, and to Barlynch Abbey on the Exe. The ragged robin and wild garlic were profuse. We returned by Pixton Park.

The Exe is "arrowy" just before its confluence with the Barle, running, as my father remarked, "too vehemently to break upon the jutting rocks." We sat next on the wooden bridge over the Exe, and he said to me: "That is an old simile but a good one, 'Time is like a river, ever past and ever future.'"

In the afternoon we drove through the Barle valley to Hawkridge, then to the Tor steps, high up among the hills, with an ancient bridge across the river, flat stones laid on piers. Some tawny cows were cooling themselves in mid-stream: a green meadow on one side, on the other a wooded slope. "If it were only to see this," he said, "the journey is worth while."

We climbed Haddon Down and then descended by Higher Combe, a valley down which there was a most luxuriant view, the Dartmoor range as background, almost Italian in colouring.

The red of the rocks and the deep green of the grass passing out of Exmouth harbour struck him. We went to Corfe Castle, and he called the ruins, "Gray relics of an old world," and pointed out that the castle was as "hollow as a skull," and liked hearing the "fierce east scream thro' the eyelet-holes."

He began the Hymn to the Sun in a new metre for his "Akbar" at Dulverton, finishing it on the voyage home.

Even now, as in his youth, he loved the new metres which he invented, and took the keenest interest in fresh fields of thought, and in new subjects for poetry. In "Akbar" he thought that the language of theology had to be interchanged with that of philosophy, and that the highest good of Akbar's code of morals was, as far as he could make it out, quite within the Christian ideal. The philosophers of the East had a great fascination for my father, and he felt that the Western religion might learn from them much of spirituality. He was sure too that Western civilization had even in his time developed Eastern thought and morality; but what direction the development would ultimately take, it was impossible to predict.

The books which he took with him at this time were (1) the *Akbar-Náma* by Akbar's minister and friend Abul-Fazl, (2) *Ain-i-Akbarí*, a great survey of India (translated by Blochmann), (3) *Miscellaneous notices of Akbar in the orthodox Mohammedan histories*, (4) *The Asiatic Quarterly*, July 1890, *The Holy Mervi* or the Gospel according to Father Jerome Xavier, (5) Sir Henry Elliot's and Elphinstone's *Histories of India*, and *Asiatic Studies*, by Alfred Lyall. Some were lent him by the Master of Balliol, who first suggested an Indian subject, saying to me: "Your father appreciates the East."

In his poem of "Akbar" my father thought that the greatness of Christianity ought to be touched upon, and wrote accordingly:

I watch'd my son,
And those that follow'd, loosen, stone from stone,
All my fair work; and from the ruin arose
The shriek and curse of trampled millions, even

As in the time before. But while I groan'd,
From out the sunset pour'd an alien race,
Who fitted stone to stone again, and Truth,
Peace, Love and Justice came and dwelt therein.

One June day an American suddenly appeared at Aldworth, saying that he had worked his way over the Atlantic in a cattle-ship in order to recite "Maud" to the author. Having pity on the man, my father allowed him to do so, but suffered from the recitation. We paid the reciter's passage back to America, but never heard of him again.

My father wrote in July to Gladstone about the death of his eldest son:

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Only one word from myself and my wife to say how fully we sympathize with you. More than this one word at the present moment would be intrusive.

He spent his birthday, Aug. 6th, quietly, talking over old days with Aubrey de Vere.

Many guests at Aldworth. Lord and Lady Dufferin, Lady Compton, the Leckys, Sir Daniel Wilson from Toronto University, Mr and Mrs Rolfe and Mr McCabe from America, the Bishop of Ripon, the Dean of Westminster, the Henry Sidgwicks, and Mr Lewis Morris who paid us several visits during these last summers.

We often sat now on the heather at the top of Blackdown to watch the sunset, and my father took his friends there to talk with him.

Jowett could not come to us as he had hoped to do, since he had fallen seriously ill; he wrote to me:

The doctors seem to think that I am seriously ill, and although I think that I am very likely to recover, I should like to send my most grateful love to your father and mother for

all their kindness to me. At such a serious time some of my old projects come back upon me. One of these is, that your father should write a few hymns in a high strain, to be a treasure to the world and to the Church; and to come nearer to the *familiar* thoughts of men than "In Memoriam," which is a very great work of its kind, but not suited to be sung in Churches. I want him to think of millions of persons repeating his words with the living voice, during many centuries. Is this a crown to be despised? It is a thing which has never been accomplished before in the Christian world, and therefore worth doing. But I do not press it upon you, well knowing that the Poet's mind is not to be vexed, but inspired, whether in ancient or modern times, by the Spirit of God.

Mr Daly and Miss Rehan came to arrange about "Robin Hood." Mr Daly said that such a thoroughly English woodland play was sure to be popular in America. My father recommended him to look at Whymper's pictures of Sherwood Forest, which he straightway bought in order that they might be copied for the scenes. Sir Arthur Sullivan undertook to set the songs.

My father said to Mr Daly: "I don't care for 'The Foresters' as I do for 'Becket' and 'Harold.' Irving suggested the fairies in my 'Robin Hood,' else I should not have dreamed of trenching on Shakespeare's ground in that way. Then Irving wrote to me that the play was not 'sensational' enough for an English public. It is a woodland play—a pastoral without shepherds. The great stage-drama is wholly unlike most of the drama of modern times. I do not like the idea of every scene being obliged to end with a *bang*." About "There is no land like England," he added, "I wrote that song when I was nineteen. It has a beastly chorus against the French, and I must alter that if you will have it."

Before Christmas he had written a new scene and a new song for Miss Rehan—"Love flew in at the window."

*Letters to friends*, 1891.

After the reports of the terrible persecution of the Russian Jews, the following letter was written by my father to the Secretary of the Russo-Jewish Committee:

*Oct. 1st*, 1891.

I have read what is reported of the Russian persecutions by your paper, and by the press generally; and if that be true, I can only say that Russia has disgraced her Church and her nationality. I once met the Czar. He seemed a kind and good-natured man. I can scarcely believe that he is fully aware of the barbarities perpetrated with his apparent sanction.

TENNYSON.

A letter was sent by my father to Henry E. Shepherd, Charleston, S. C., in reply to a request that he would explain the allusions in the first stanza of "In Memoriam," beginning

I held it truth, with him who sings,

as the question had led to a long and unsatisfactory controversy among Tennyson students.

ALDWORTH, *Nov. 3rd*, 1891.

I believe I alluded to Goethe[1]. Among his last words were these: "Von Aenderungen zu höheren Aenderungen," "from changes to higher changes."

Yours sincerely,

TENNYSON.

[1] Professor Sidgwick writes to me: "I remember sitting near your father at a dinner of the Metaphysical Society, when he talked very interestingly about poets and poetry. After some remarks on Goethe's dramatic work, noting its limitations, he said that he placed him foremost among the

One of the last letters which my father wrote this year was to the young poet William Watson, whose "Wordsworth's Grave" pleased him.

FARRINGFORD, *Dec. 20th*, 1891.

I thank you; for to me who receive every morning, or all but every morning, in print or in MSS, verses, verses, verses, the voice of a poet and a patriot must all the more be grateful.

TENNYSON.

He praised too Mr Rudyard Kipling's "English Flag," and Kipling's answer to his letter of commendation gave him pleasure: "When the private in the ranks is praised by the general, he cannot presume to thank him, but he fights the better next day."

moderns as a lyrical poet. One of his hearers demurred, mentioning great lyrics by other writers. 'Yes,' your father answered, 'but Goethe is consummate in so *many different styles*': and then referred rapidly to four or five examples—I remember that 'Kennst du das Land?' and 'Ueber allen Gipfeln' were two of them—dwelling on their great diversity of tone and character. I did not like to interrupt him by an inquisitive remark: but I said to myself 'Then it is undoubtedly Goethe who sings

To one clear harp in *divers tones*.'"

# CHAPTER XXII.

## THE LAST YEAR.

### 1892.

In January Dr Hubert Parry stayed with us at Farringford, for he wished to hear my father read "The Lotos-Eaters" which he was setting to music.

For the first time my father's voice, usually so strong, failed while reading this poem and the "Ode on the Duke of Wellington," which he was anxious that a great composer should set as he read it.

Someone said to my father: "No one has written finer things about music than you have done—

> Music that gentlier on the spirit lies
> Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes.
>
> The tides of music's golden sea
> Setting toward Eternity.
>
> The glory of the sum of things
> Will flash along the chords and go.
>
> Love took up the harp of life and smote on all the chords with might,
> Smote the chord of self that trembling past in music out of sight."

And these he too thought were among his most successful lines; the last simile especially.

Music seemed to him to be the language of spirits, and he would say: "I can feel the glory though I cannot follow the music. I know that I miss a great deal by not understanding it. It often seems to me that music must take up expression at the point where poetry leaves off, and expresses what cannot be expressed in words."

After hearing "Comfort ye" sung, by which he was greatly impressed (as he was generally by Handel), he said to Miss Ritchie, "It is difficult to believe that the man who wrote that was developed from the Ascidian," and after hearing Joachim play the "Trillo del Diavolo" (in 1878), "I can feel the magic and poetry of the *bowing*."

When his friends asked him now to write on every-day topics, he said, "I cannot; I must write what I am thinking about and I have not much time." The yearning of his whole heart was to

Follow the Gleam.

At the end of January he wrote his lines on the death of the Duke of Clarence.

The Princess of Wales had written (January, 1885) to my father on the coming of age of the Duke: that she had been in hopes that "the Poet Laureate would have been inspired" on that occasion, and that she might "have been gladdened by a few beautiful lines in honour of the event."

And my father had answered:

ALDWORTH.

MADAM,

I thank your Royal Highness for your kind letter, and congratulate the young Prince and trust

that all Honour and Happiness may attend him thro' life.

To me the paths leading into the future seem somewhat gloomy and (as our Shakespeare says in his *Julius Cæsar*) "crave wary walking," but then I am an old man in my 76th year, and in spite of my apprehension, the age to come may have its own sunshine both for crown and people. That the Supreme Power may bless you and yours through both worlds is the wish of

Your affectionate servant,

TENNYSON.

As he had not sent a poem then, he was anxious, although unwell at the time, to speak some words of comfort for the poor mother, when the Duke died. He wrote his poem in two days but the strain told upon him severely. He said: Watts would make a fine picture of "The face of Death is toward the Sun of Life, His shadow darkens earth."

In March he recovered his voice and sang an octave to the piano as clearly as possible. He read "The Passing of Arthur" to Lord Houghton (now Lord Crewe) and his sister, Mrs Henniker, as well as ever, but he found the large Easter party too much for him.

On March 25th "The Foresters" was produced at New York by Daly. It gave him great pleasure to hear that American people were "appreciative of the fancy and of the beauty, and especially of the songs and of the wise sayings about life in which the woodland play abounds[1]." The houses were packed and the play had a long and most successful run.

[1] Jowett.

Before the production my father wrote to Augustin Daly:

I wish you all success with my "Robin Hood and Maid Marian." From what I know of Miss Ada Rehan I am sure that she will play her part to perfection, and I am certain that under your management, with the music by one so popular as Sir Arthur Sullivan, with the costumes fashioned after the old designs in the British Museum, with the woodland scenes taken from Mr Whymper's beautiful pictures of the Sherwood of to-day, my play will be produced to advantage both in America and in England. I am told that your company is good, and that Mr Jefferson once belonged to it. When he was in England, I saw him play *Rip van Winkle*, and assuredly nothing could have been better.

With all cordial greetings to my American friends,

I remain faithfully yours,

TENNYSON.

And he received the following from Miss Ada Rehan:

Let me add my congratulations to the many on the success of "The Foresters." I cannot tell you how delighted I was when I felt and saw, from the first, the joy it was giving to our large audience. Its charm is felt by all. Let me thank you for myself for the honour of playing your "Maid Marian," which I have learned to love, for while I am playing the part I feel all its beauty and simplicity and sweetness, which make me feel for the time a happier and a better woman. I am indeed proud of its great success for your sake as well as my own.

P.S. The play is now one week old, and each audience has been larger than the last and all as sympathetic as the first.

And Professor Jebb wrote:

Being here on my way to the Johns Hopkins University at Baltimore, where I have some Lectures to give, I naturally went to see "The Foresters" at Augustin Daly's last night. The Theatre, which is of moderate size, was densely packed, and as I had not engaged my seat by cablegram from Liverpool, I bore no resemblance, in respect of spacious comfort, to the ideal spectator, the masher or "dude," depicted on the play-bill which I send you by this post. I was a highly compressed and squalid object in a back seat, amid a seething mass of humanity, but I saw the play very well. It was very cordially received and was well acted, I thought, especially by Ada Rehan and Drew. The fairy scene in the third Act was perfectly lovely, and the lyrics were everywhere beautifully given. The mounting of the play was excellent throughout.

The criticism of "The Foresters" which pleased my father most was in a letter addressed to Lady Martin (Miss Helen Faucit) by the eminent Shakespearian scholar, Mr Horace Furness of Philadelphia, when the piece was being performed in New York:

After dinner we went to see "The Foresters." Men and women—of a different time, to be sure, but none too good "for human nature's daily food"—live their idyllic lives before you, and you feel that all is good, very good. The atmosphere is so real, and we fall into it so completely, that, Americans though we be through and through, we can listen with hearty assent to the chorus that "There is no land like England," and that "There are no wives like English wives." Nay, come to think of it, that song was encored. It was charming, charming from beginning to end. And Miss Rehan acted to perfection. I had to leave in the midnight train for home, and during two hours' driving through the black night, I smoked and reflected on the unalloyed charm of such a drama. And to see the popularity, too! It had been running many weeks—six, I think—and the theatre was full, not a seat unoccupied. I do revel, I confess, in such a proof as this that there will always be a full response to what is fine and good, and that the modern sensational French drama is not our true exponent.

In answer to a poem sent by William Watson at this time my father wrote:

"I thank you once more for your fine lines, tho' they somewhat abash me, as overpraise.

If by 'wintry hair' you allude to a tree whose leaves are half gone, you are right, but if you mean 'white' you are wrong, for I never had a gray hair on my head."

In his morning and night solitudes my father was finishing "Akbar's Dream," in which was much of his own spirit of toleration.

He thought the "Hymn to the Sun" and "Spirit, nearing yon dark portal" the best of the smaller poems in his new volume.

"I should like," he said, "to write a long poem in the metre of 'Akbar's Hymn,' it is a magnificent metre."

After these were written he began "Kapiolani," and "Whirl and follow the Sun."

For forty-two years my father had had among his various strange letters an anonymous abusive letter, evidently from the same writer, on the appearance of every new volume. We generally contrived to burn them, so that he knew nothing of them. One such letter arrived this spring, and he saw it and was "sorry," he said, "for the man who had so much spite."

During these months my father talked about his early days, and his parents, and told Mr Douglas Freshfield, who frequently accompanied him on his morning walks, how his "grandfather and grandmother, when courting, were sitting on the steps of the Caistor House in the market-place. Part of the parapet fell on the step the

moment after they had left it, or both would have been killed." "Where would you have been then, my dear?" his grandmother would say to him.

He spoke of his pleasure in Bishop Wilberforce's last visit to him, of his sudden death, and of the Bishop's story of the "table-turning" when he was staying with Judge Alderson at Farringford. A table moved towards the door where the Bishop was standing, he exorcised the supposed spirit, and then the table stood still, rapping out, "I can't abide a Bishop."

Half-way on his walks now he would sit down and rest, gazing up at the drifting clouds, or below over the blue waste of waters, or noting as of old with care the flight and song of the different birds, or looking at the flowers about him[1], or at the small insects in the grass, and wondering whether they felt no pain, only discomfort. "It is a comfort to think that it is only discomfort," he would say.

Hold thou, my friend, no lesser life in scorn,
All Nature is the womb whence Man is born[2].

I heard him quote more than once then:

"The wan moon is setting behind the white wave,
And time is setting for me, oh!"

In April my father had two or three talks with Mr Herbert Warren, the President of Magdalen. The following is a sample taken down at the time partly by Warren, partly by myself.

[1] One day, looking at the flower of the spurge he said:

Spurge with fairy crescent set,
Like the flower of Mahomet.

[2] Lines he made on one of these walks.

He began about Catullus:

"Catullus says that a poet's lines may be impure provided his life is pure. I don't agree with him: his verses fly much further than he does. There is hardly any crime greater than for a man with genius to propagate vice by his written words. I have always admired him: 'Acme and Septimius' is lovely. Then he has very pretty metres. 'Collis O Heliconii' is in a beautiful metre. I wrote a great part of my 'Jubilee Ode' in it. People didn't understand. They don't understand these things. They don't understand English scansion. In the line 'Dream not of where some sunny rose may linger' they said the first syllable of 'sunny' was long, whereas it evidently is short. Doubling the *n* in English makes the vowel before short."

At his request Warren repeated some undergraduate lines about Jowett:

"What I know not is not knowledge:
I am the Master of this college."

"Very unfair," my father said, "Jowett never set up to be omniscient. It might possibly have suited Whewell. Jowett got his pronunciation of 'knowledge' from me (long o). 'Free-will, fore-knowledge absolute.' 'Fore-knŏlledge' would be horrible there."

The talk turned on religion and "God is Love," and he said that Jowett, who had liked the simple hymn for children in "The Promise of May," Act III. Sc. I, wanted him to write another hymn, and he quoted a prayer by Jowett, praying that "we might see ourselves as others see us." "I should not pray for that: others cannot see much of one's inner self."

*Warren* (*after a pause*). Is not the existence of evil (the "mystery of iniquity") the great difficulty?

*A. T.* Yes. I tried to bring that out in a poem that comes after the "Charge of the Heavy Brigade."

That charge was a wonderful affair. An officer who was there, after they came out said it was the finest excitement ever known, that drink, gambling, and horse-racing were nothing to it.

*Warren.* Will you write the hymn?

*A. T.* A good hymn is the most difficult thing in the world to write. In a good hymn you have to be commonplace and poetical. The moment you cease to be commonplace and put in any expression at all out of the common, it ceases to be a hymn. Of hymns I like Heber's[1] "Holy, Holy, Holy" better than most, it is in a fine metre too. What will people come to in a hundred years? do you think they will give up all religious forms and go and sit in silence in the Churches listening to the organs?

*Warren.* There is more religion now than there was twenty years ago.

*A. T.* I think there is more religion now among the parsons, though they are often very ignorant about modern criticism and about the great religions of the world, and they certainly cannot read aloud. Did you ever hear that story of Rawnsley's? The clerk told him not to read the service so fast: "For you mooöst gie me toime, Mr Rawnsley, you mooöst i'deed. You *mooöst* gie me toime, for I've a graäceless wife an' two godless soons to praäy for."

There's his other story too of the lady distributing a tract about invalids going for health's sake in the winter to sunny climates: (Mrs C.) I didn't like that book at all as your sister browt me. (Lady) Why what was it? (Mrs C.) Why it was 'Chaäsin' the soon'; and

[1] He would often quote this passage from the version of the Psalms by Sternhold and Hopkins:

> "And on the wings of all the winds
> Came flying all abroad."

I doän't think nothink to chaäsin' the soon! Chaäsin' the soon i'deed! I think God A'Moighty 'ull soon let folks know as cheevies him: he'll be taäkin' an' puttin' it somewhere else I reckon. Chaäsin' the soon i'deed! I doän't like sich waäys.

Lincolnshire is a fine broad dialect. Yorkshire is clipt.

I asked my way to Mr Robert —, of a Yorkshire "swain." He answered, "Bob a Bob tapt-hill" (Robert the son of Robert lives at the top of the hill).

(They walked to the house of "Ideal Ward." My father quoted Shakespeare about Pompey the Great.)

*Warren.* If it is Shakespeare.

*A. T.* There is a great deal of Shakespeare that Shakespeare never wrote, e.g. the speeches of Antonio and Sebastian "Below you baggage," etc.

(They talked about Shelley and Byron, and my father said that he would have sooner known Shelley than Byron.)

*A. T.* I just escaped being in the battle of Navarino. A relation of mine had secured a berth on one of the men-of-war; then, as they say in the north, he "rued" and offered it to my father. I was mad to go, but my father would not let me. My cousin George Tennyson went. He did not see much. The captain had all the hatches closed and ordered him below, yet in an electioneering speech at Stamford, when my uncle beat the man who was afterwards the late Lord Exeter, someone referred to his son George as "the hero who had waved his chivalric sword at the battle of Navarino."

(Then the talk turned on Walter Scott.)

*A. T.* I would have given anything to have seen Walter Scott.

(They came upon the Roman kiln, like a beehive by the side of the road to Alum Bay.)

*A. T.* It's odd that we know so little of the Roman

occupation of Britain. Tacitus has described the climate very well: "cœlum crebris imbribus ac nebulis fœdum: asperitas frigorum abest."

Warren asked if my father would write an installation Ode to Lord Hartington at Cambridge.

*A. T.* No, certainly not; writing to order is what I hate. They think a poet can write poems to order as a bootmaker makes boots. For the Queen I am obliged to do it, but she has been very kind and has only asked me once or twice. They call the "Ode on the Duke of Wellington" a Laureate Ode; nothing of the kind! it was written from genuine admiration of the man.

He told Warren the story about the Duke being piloted across Piccadilly and saying to his pilot, who was expatiating on the great honour done him, "Don't be a d—d fool." My father said humorously, "It is almost as great in its way as the battle of Waterloo. A Frenchman would have answered, 'Mais, oui, on m'appelle le grand.'"

*April 10th.* My father and Warren walked in the ball-room. My father quoted the line of Horace,

"Nec satis est pulchra esse poemata, dulcia sunto,"

and asked Warren to explain it.

Warren said he thought it meant "It is not enough for poems to be beautiful and correct in form, they must have a charm."

"Yes," my father said, "that's what I think." Then he quoted Milton, Virgil, Browning, and Molière, and said, "Molière is the greatest French poet, he is so sane."

The talk turned upon fame. My father said, "I hate spite more than I love fame."

O wretched race of slander-speaking men.

Οἵη περ φύλλων γενεὴ τοιήδε καὶ ἀνδρῶν.

Warren asked him about his blank verse, and my

father told him that it was very various, but variations in the metre were disliked by ordinary readers, such as

Dust, and the points of lances bicker in it—

the short syllables expressing the movement of the light He instanced Virgil's "Et vera incessu patuit dea," and wondered how many scholars saw the greatness in movement of such a line. He quoted Pindar's Threnody "λάμπει δὲ—," and Euripides' chorus "ἀνὰ δὲ κέλαδος ἔμολε πόλιν."

Warren mentioned "The Foresters." My father repeated his songs "Down with John" and "Love flew in at the window[1]," which he had made shortly before Daly put "The Foresters" on the stage last month; then said: "'Robin and Richard!' Did you notice that I would not say '*Richard* and Robin?' It does not sound well. There's a mistake in the book about the wild goose and the wild swan. They are not seen in England now-a-days when the woods are in leaf. They might perhaps when England was wilder, but I do not know about that. I thought that I was wrong at the time, and since then I have consulted my bird-books, and have corrected it in a second edition."

My father quoted Pope and the description of a garden, "like his own," he said,

"Grove nods to grove, each alley has his brother";

then Swift on the Irish Demon Club *à propos* of Home Rule in Ireland.

In June the Duke of Connaught called upon him. They discussed the state of India and talked on the splendour of the Himalayan Peaks at sunrise when they "hung like fiery lamps in the sky." My father was just then full of a letter from Woolner about a Japanese poet:

[1] The last song he ever wrote.

I heard a curious thing a time ago and I thought of telling you, but knowing your father must have numerous such stories told him, I did not. A gentleman I know lived a long time in Japan, and travelling in a remote part, he was received with great courtesy in a village he stayed at; and to show respect he was taken and introduced to the chief Japanese poet, who lived there. He was an old man over 80; and, on learning that my friend was an Englishman, he said that he had a great favour to ask of him, and went to a cabinet and fetched a book, and asked him to read those poems by the great Poet of England. They were pieces of "In Memoriam" he had copied out. My friend read them carefully and as well as he could. The old poet thanked him, and said, that, tho' he did not know the words, the music spoke to him, and he knew he felt as the poet felt when he wrote the poems, for the music talked in a tongue that could not be mistaken, and he knew the poems were very beautiful. This was immensely interesting to me, as it suggested that sound played so great a part of the meaning in all language. Consider the language of beasts. You do not know a syllable of their language, and yet how unmistakable is the meaning of every sound, of a cow lowing to go home, and the same cow lowing after her calf has been taken from her. I wish that I had written at the time for I forget the exact form of all the old poet said, but it was most gratifying to find the great man of Japan loving, tho' so imperfectly, the poetry of our great Poet—as he said, "We talk to each other across the World."

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Colonel Crozier again lent us his yacht, and we made another pilgrimage to my uncle Frederick's in Jersey, taking Dartmouth, Guernsey, and Sark on our way. At Guernsey our pleasantest time was spent in the Bay "Moulin Huet," a craggy bay, with dark green satin water in pools among the rocks. My father quoted his own lines from "Enid" about the dress which Earl Doorm offered her,

> Where, like a shoaling sea, the lovely blue
> Play'd into green.

The next lines, he said, were made at Farringford: "After the Down had been wrapt in mist through one night, the next

morning it looked as if covered with flashing jewels—all the colours of the rainbow."

> And thicker down the front
> With jewels than the sward with drops of dew,
> When all night long a cloud clings to the hill,
> And with the dawn ascending lets the day
> Strike where it clung; so thickly shone the gems.

Then the cuckoo began to sing, and he repeated from Wordsworth's "Reaper":

> "Breaking the silence of the seas
> Among the furthest Hebrides."

At St Peter's we visited the Museum, with its collections of butterflies and birds, and a library of 600,000 volumes.

On Sunday the Salvationists were singing somewhat loudly in the streets, and he said of them—

> For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight,
> His can't be wrong whose life is in the right.

The island of Sark he had long wished to see. The day was cloudless, and on landing we climbed up through the rock-tunnel.

From this tunnel we walked up a bowery lane, and secured a waggonette, but the jolting over the roads was terrific. We drove to Little Sark; and the narrow passage between Great and Little Sark, and the view from the rock bridge, the precipice with the "curve of white sand below on either hand," and the jagged rocks, like altars and spires, that rose out of the clear sea, struck him more than anything else.

At St Ewold's, Jersey, we found my uncle Frederick and his son Giulio at home. The two brothers again talked over the old times, and my uncle's poems, "The Isles of Greece," "Daphne and other poems," and my father especially praised "The Death of Alcæus."

The gasometer, which stands between St Ewold's and the fine view of St Heliers and the sea, rather troubled my father; his brother replied, "Oh, I have grown to think of it as the Temple of Vesta. You see the resemblance I hope." I found

that my uncle's estimate of Arthur Hallam was as high as my father's. "At Eton," he said, "I think our impression was that Hallam, and not Gladstone, was the coming great man." We tried to persuade him to come on board the yacht and visit us in the Isle of Wight, but he said, "No, I shall never leave this place: it is the next best climate to Italy." When the brothers bade "good-bye," they thought that they would not in this life see each other again: "Good-night, true brother, here, good-morrow there!" We returned by Torquay to Farringford.

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Before leaving for Aldworth we spent some delightful sunny days in the Farringford gardens. In the afternoons my father sat in his summer-house and talked to us and his friends.

This spring he had enjoyed seeing the unusually splendid blossom of apple and pear tree, of white lilacs, and of purple aubretia that bordered the walks.

At intervals he strolled to the bottom of the kitchen garden to look at the roses, or at the giant fig-tree ("like a breaking wave" as he said) bursting into leaf; or he marked the "branching grace" of the stately line of elms, between the boles of which, from his summer-house, he caught a glimpse of far meadows beyond. He said that he did not believe in Emerson's pretty lines—

> "Only to children children sing,
> Only to youth the Spring is Spring."

"For age does feel the joy of spring[1], though age can

[1] "What joyous things," he said, "are those larks in the spring sun! Do you know that pathetic story of the lark and of the man freed from the Bastille during the French Revolution? As he came from prison someone took pity on him and gave him a few sous. Passing down the street, he saw a lark in a cage: and the man, who had been in prison many years, could not bear the sight of the imprisoned bird. With his few poor sous he bought it and set it free. The lark shot up to heaven, singing a jubilant song of triumph—but the next moment had dropt dead at the man's feet, dead with excess of joy."

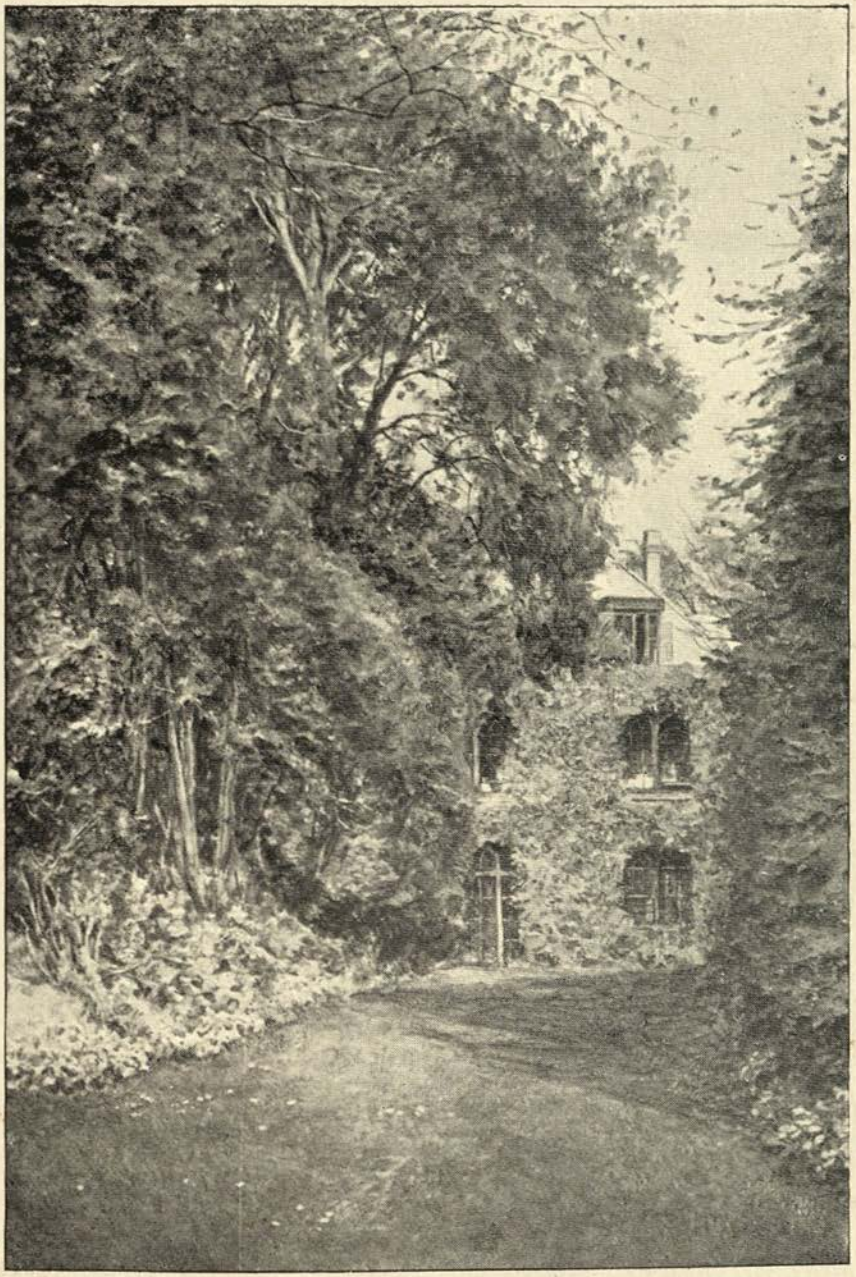
only crawl over the bridge while youth skips the brook." His talk was grave and gay together. In the middle of anecdotes he would stop short and say something of what he felt to be the sadness and mystery of life.

What impressed all his friends was his choice of language, the felicity of his turns of expression, his imagery, the terseness of his unadorned English, and his simple directness of manner, which none will ever be able to reproduce, however many notes they may have taken. His dignity and repose of manner, his low musical voice, and the power of his magnetic dark eye kept the attention riveted. His argument was clear and logical and never wandered from the point except by way of illustration, and his illustrations were the most various I have ever heard, and were taken from Nature and science, from high and low life, from the rich and from the poor, and his analysis of character was always subtle and powerful.

While he talked of the mysteries of the universe, his face, full of the strong lines of thought, was lighted up; and his words glowed as it were with inspiration.

When conversing with my brother and myself or our college friends, he was, I used to think, almost at his best, for he would quote us the fine passages from ancient or modern literature and show us why they are fine, or he would tell us about the great facts and discoveries in Astronomy[1], Geology, Botany, Chemistry, and the great problems in philosophy, helping us toward a higher conception of the laws which govern the world

[1] His knowledge of astronomy was most remarkable, and the accuracy of his talk about the stars surprised more than one of the great astronomers. Of late the spectrum analysis of light, and the photographs which reveal starlight in the interstellar spaces where stars were hitherto undreamt of, and the idea of the all-pervading luminiferous æther, particularly interested him.



A GLADE AT FARRINGFORD

*From a Water-colour Drawing by Mrs. Allingham*

and of "the law behind the law." He was so sympathetic that the enthusiasm of youth seemed to kindle his own. He spoke out of the fulness of his heart, and explained more eloquently than ever where his own difficulties lay, and what he, as an old man, thought was the true mainspring of human life and action; and

> How much of act at human hands
> The sense of human will demands
> By which we dare to live or die.

The truth is that real genius, unless made shallow by prejudice, is seldom frozen by age, and that, until absolute physical decay sets in, the powers of the mind may become stronger and stronger.

On one of these June mornings, Miss L—, who was a stranger to us, but whose brother we had known for some time, called upon us. My father took her over the bridge to the summer-house looking on the Down. After a little while he said: "Miss L—, my son says I am to read to you," and added, "I will read whatever you like." He read some of "Maud," "The Spinster's Sweet-Arts," and some "Enoch Arden."

His voice, as Miss L— noticed, was melodious and full of change, and quite unimpaired by age. There was a peculiar freshness and passion in his reading of "Maud," giving the impression that he had just written the poem, and that the emotion which created it was fresh in him. This had an extraordinary influence on the listener, who felt that the reader had been *present* at the scenes he described, and that he still felt their bliss or agony.

He thoroughly enjoyed reading his "The Spinster's Sweet-Arts," and when he was reading "Enoch Arden" he told Miss L— to listen to the sound of the sea in the line

> The league-long roller thundering on the reef,

and to mark Miriam Lane's chatter in

> He ceased; and Miriam Lane
> Made such a voluble answer promising all.

We then went for a three miles' walk, my father talking of the Passion Play at Ober-Ammergau, of religion, of faith, and of immortality. While touching on the life after death he spoke of Carlyle, and his dimness of faith in the closing years of his life. He said that when he was stopping at a coffee-house in London, Carlyle had come to smoke a pipe with him in the evening and the talk turned upon the immortality of the soul; upon which Carlyle said: "Eh! old Jewish rags: you must clear your mind of all that. Why should we expect a hereafter? Your traveller comes to an inn, and he takes his bed, it's only for one night, he leaves next day, and another man takes his place and sleeps in the bed that he has vacated." My father continued: "I answered, 'Your traveller comes to his inn, and lies down in his bed, and leaves the inn in the morning, and goes on his way rejoicing, with the sure and certain hope and belief that he is going somewhere, where he will sleep the next night,' and then Edward Fitzgerald, who was present, said, 'You have him there'": "which proves," said my father, "how dangerous an illustration is."

Miss L— writes:

We came home by the Farringford farm, and into the garden. Before he went up the slope he seemed exhausted, and sat down to rest on a melon-frame, and asked me to sit by him. It was the first sign I had noticed of failing strength, and gave one a sudden pang. He spoke rather sadly of his age, nearly 83, and of what one must expect at that age. He seemed to love life,

and to have every reason to love it, surrounded by love, companionship, sympathy, and all that makes life sweet. There seemed so little reason why he should die, and it was impossible to associate any thought of death with him that day, except from his own words. As we walked up the garden he pointed out the splendour of the flowers to me. The garden was in all the beauty of the June mid-day brightness, and he spoke as if he were sorry to be leaving it to go away.

We sat some time in the summer-house, and then Mr H. joined us with the dogs. After a few minutes' talk I got up to go, and he asked me to stay to lunch. I did not do so, and he said playfully, "Naughty girl not to do as I tell you!" He walked with me back to the house and I thanked him for his reading. I said good-bye to him on the terrace.

I had never seen Lord Tennyson until this day. I think his greatest charm lay in his unworldliness and sincerity, in his tenderness and strong simplicity, and in a youthfulness which age could not destroy. That unworldliness and "apartness" had marked itself very impressively on his home. The home and garden, and surroundings at Farringford were like something not to be seen elsewhere. One approached the house with a sort of awe. It seemed so remote and still, and as though the jar of the outside world had never entered it, a home at unity with itself.

On June 28th he wrote to an unknown correspondent, on the eve of the general election:

SIR,

I love Mr Gladstone but hate his present Irish policy.

I am yours faithfully,

TENNYSON.

He was gratified that the large Unionist meetings throughout Great Britain had adopted, as their motto, his line:

One life, one flag, one fleet, one Throne.

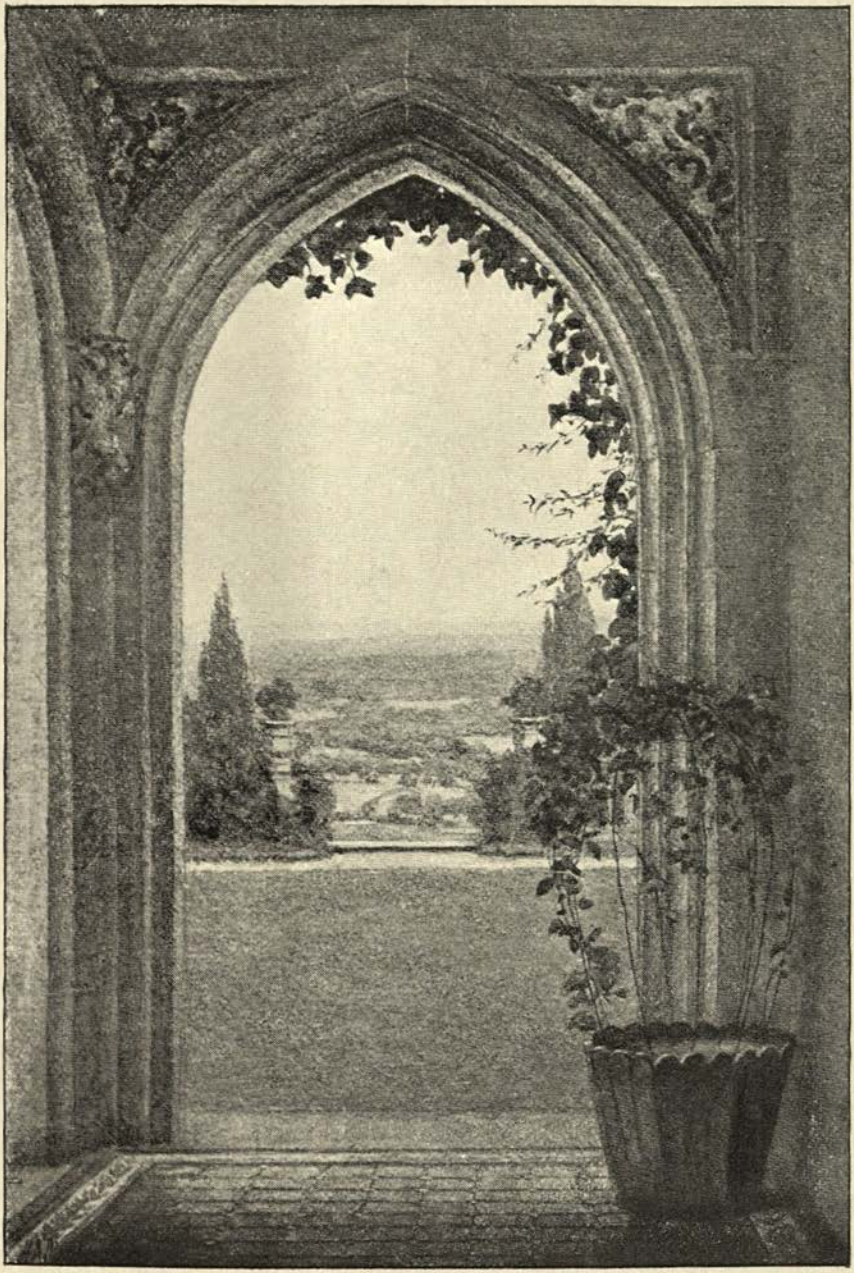
On June 29th the Rector of Freshwater, Dr Merriman, administered the Sacrament to us all in my father's study. The service was very solemn. Before he partook of the Communion he quoted his own words, put into Cranmer's mouth:

It is but a communion, not a mass:
No sacrifice but a life-giving feast;

impressing upon the Rector that he could not partake of it at all, unless it were administered in that sense.

*June 30th.* We left for Aldworth. My father at first took his regular walks of a mile out and a mile in, over Blackdown, but the walks dwindled down and he sat more and more in his summer-houses. One summer-house was used when the west wind was blowing; the other when the east wind was blowing, or when there was a gorgeous sunset. These command views quite different in character from his arbours at Farringford; from which, as I have said, we have glimpses of sea and meadows through bowers of elm-trees.

From the eastern summer-house at Aldworth you see under alders and birches, over a heather-glade, a stretch of cornland and woodland, with here and there a mellow grange nestled in some dell of the Sussex Weald, and far off the long line of Leith Hill and the Kentish Downs. The "sunset arbour" looks on Blackdown, bleak ridges "fledged with pine," or northward, beyond promontories of beech and holly, beyond the red roofs of Haslemere, up to the bold form of Hindhead. Latterly his walks were confined to what he called "my demon-haunted



VIEW FROM THE PORCH AT ALDWORTH

*From a Water-colour Drawing by Mrs. Allingham*

hill"; with groves of oak close at hand—"grain storm-strengthened on a windy site";—and larch and chestnut clothing the more distant slopes, haunts of woodpecker, jay, wood-pigeon and turtle-dove. The colours of the vegetation carpeting the moor behind Aldworth, as he saw them this last autumn, were very various, almost like a garden of flowers, ranging from the gray lichen, and the brown and the light green mosses, to the fading purple ling, the scarlet bramble bushes and whortle-berries, and the brilliant fields of golden fern. On the summit of Blackdown we used to watch many wild birds, owls of all sorts, night-jars, sparrow-hawks, hobby-hawks, pheasants, partridges, whose cries reminded him of a "rusty key turned in a lock[1]." Then if in the evening we wandered by the stone-diggers' cart-tracks, we often heard the "swish" of a flock of wild duck as they passed overhead, or the wail of a plover, winging its way to the chain of solitary pools. From either side of the Down gush clear fountains of water, some of them at this time half hidden by the "soft wool of the autumn willow-herb." These delighted him. Some flow down to join the Wey, others wend their course to the Arun, but the great want of our views, as he said, was the sight of "a full-fed river winding through the landscape."

On July 12th we were staying with Mr Craik in Halkin Street, and visited the Royal Academy, where the heat and the crowd oppressed my father; then the Natural History Museum, where he insisted on walking through the geological part and seeing again his old friends the Ichthyosaurus, the Plesiosaurus, and the Giant Sloth. Professor Flower took us afterwards to the Bird's-nest room, and my father said, "I wish I could have seen this when I was a young man." In the evening my wife and I went to see Sarah Bernhardt's magnificent

[1] See "Lover's Tale."

rendering of *Phèdre*. My father would have liked to come with us but did not feel equal to it. He was anxious on our return to hear how she spoke "*Tu l'as nommé*."

When we returned to Aldworth we saw many friends. We had no real summer weather and my father felt the cold.

On his eighty-third birthday he quoted some of Milton's blank verse with profoundest admiration:

> "That proud honour claim'd
> Azazel as his right, a cherub tall
> Who forthwith from the glittering staff unfurl'd
> The imperial ensign; which full high advanced,
> Showed like a meteor streaming to the wind,
> With gems and golden lustre rich emblazed,
> Seraphic arms and trophies; all the while
> Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds."

"What a grand line!" he said of the last. Then he quoted—

> "Whose wanton passions in the sacred porch
> Ezekiel saw, when by the vision led
> His eye survey'd the dark idolatries
> Of alienated Judah."

"This is very like Virgil in its movement," he continued. "If Virgil is to be translated it ought to be in this elaborate kind of blank verse."

He then repeated to Mr Frederic Harrison the following passage from De Quincey's *Opium Eater*, characterizing his prose as some of the finest in the English language—"not poetry," he observed, "but as fine as any verse":

"Yet I knew, even in my dream, that they had been in the grave for nearly two centuries. This pageant

would suddenly dissolve; and, at a clapping of hands, would be heard the heart-quaking sound of *Consul Romanus;* and immediately come 'sweeping by,' in gorgeous paludaments, Paulus or Marius, girt round by a company of centurions, with the crimson tunic hoisted on a spear, and followed by the *alalagmos* of the Roman legions."

Mr R— asked my father: "Apart from the Bible, the Psalms, and the Book of Common Prayer, which, I know, you consider were written at the grandest period of English, in what six authors should you say you find the stateliest English prose?"

He answered: "Probably in Hooker, Bacon, Milton, Jeremy Taylor, De Quincey, Ruskin. Some of Sir Thomas Browne too is very stately; and some of the Acts of Elizabeth, Froude tells me, are written in the grandest language that he knows. Listen to this from Bacon: 'It is a heaven upon earth when a man's mind rests on Providence, moves in Charity, and turns upon the poles of Truth.'" Of the *Essays* he said: "There is more wisdom compressed into that small volume than into any other book of the same size that I know."

He liked the following birthday letter from Edward Wilkinson, a working-man:

87, ALBERT ROAD,
MIDDLESBOROUGH ON TEES,
YORKSHIRE, *Aug.* 5*th*, 1892.

MY LORD TENNYSON,

All hail to your Lordship i send you a Real Yorkshire Greeting Comeing from an old Working man and i do from my heart congratulate you upon the Rare Event the Celebrating of your 83rd Birthday. God Bless you my very best are for your health and happiness and i wish your Lordship God's Speed with vigorous Health and Strength to Enjoy life with although at the ripe old age of eighty-three itz not too late

yet to enjoy life and i see no Reason by God helping you that you should not live to Celebrate your 100 Birthday. believe me when i says my Poor congratulations and good wishes are as Sincear and true altho' Echoed from apoor Cottage as those Echoed from apalace trusting that You will Spend a happy time with all Your family that take part in the fastavel and ihope and trust that this Celebration will not be the last by avery great number and that this liberty from a poor old working man will give no offense.

May God smile upon you on this your 83rd Birthday.

Yours faithfully,

EDWARD WILKINSON.

*The last letters written by my father*, 1892.

*To E. W. Whymper.*

ALDWORTH, HASLEMERE,
SURREY, 1892.

DEAR SIR,

Accept my thanks for your most interesting volume.

I don't think that I have been higher than about 7000 feet, and so I look on your Chimborazos and Cotopaxis with all the greater veneration.

Yours very truly, TENNYSON.

*To Sir Henry Parkes, K.C.M.G.*

ALDWORTH, HASLEMERE,
SURREY, *Aug.* 13*th*, 1892.

MY DEAR SIR HENRY,

I have received your Australian opals which, as symbols of your kindly recollections of myself, are

and will be to me more precious than ten times their weight in diamonds.

I have entered my 84th year. I have entirely lost, as far as reading is concerned, the use of my right eye, and I fear that the left is going in the same way, but I trust that my sight will last me till your *Fifty Years in the making of Australian History* is published.

Believe me yours ever,

TENNYSON.

*To the Zemindar Bechari Lal.*

HASLEMERE, *Aug. 27th*, 1892.

I thank my young brother of the East for all the good wishes he sends to his old brother of the West, and I rejoice that he has sung in their common tongue (English) the praises of that great and good sovereign, to whom all her subjects owe such deep reverence and love. Accept every best wish (not forgetting the wish that practice may, as you say, make your verse perfect) and thanks too for your little books.

Believe me truly yours,

TENNYSON.

In the beginning of September, though feeling very ill, my father looked over a book of poems at the earnest entreaty of a stranger, Mr Dalmon, and made one or two criticisms. He crossed out Mr Dalmon's despairing words about poetry—"*The end is failure*"—saying to him: "How can there be failure, if the divine speak through the human, be it through the voice of prince or peasant?"

In the middle of the month his old friends Lord Selborne and the late Master of Balliol visited him. One of the principal topics of conversation was Max Müller's speech at the Oriental Congress, the spirit of which my father considered admirable. He did not feel himself strong enough for religious discussions with Jowett, and begged Jowett not to consult with him or argue with him, as was his wont, on points of philosophy and religious doubt[1]. The Master of Balliol answered him in a remarkable utterance. "Your poetry has *an element of philosophy more to be considered than any regular philosophy in England.* It is almost too much impregnated with philosophy, yet this to some minds will be its greatest charm. I believe that your 'In Memoriam' and your 'Crossing the Bar' will live for ever in men's hearts[2]." And he spoke to me afterwards of my father's "great and deep strength."

The qualities in Jowett which most attracted my father were his childlikeness, his absolute simplicity of life, his aversion from all that was unreal and affected, his admiration of what seemed to him to be truthful and naturally beautiful, and his power of imagination, which my father thought essential in any philosopher. Another bond between them was that both had it in their hearts to help their brother men to the utmost of their power. The poor student who needed help, the wealthy student who needed guidance, could have no truer friend than the Master of Balliol; and as for my father, I need hardly say that wherever in the world help seemed to

[1] I remember my father saying of animated discussion, "You rarely find dew after a windy night."

[2] Jowett has also left this utterance in a MS Note.

Mr Gladstone writes, October 25th, 1895: "I have a great conception of your father as *philosopher*. The 'sage' of Chelsea (a genius too) was small in comparison with him. Everyone admires your father: I look upon him in his works and words with reverence."

be needed which he could give, he was sure to give it ungrudgingly and unostentatiously.

Later in the month Mr Dakyns, and Mr and Mrs Craik, Mr and Mrs Bram Stoker and Mr Walter Leaf came to see us. With Mr Craik he looked over all the proofs of his new volume, "Death of Œnone," "Akbar's Dream," etc. The last poem he finished was "Whirl and follow the Sun," and the last prose passage he inserted was the preface to "Kapiolani." This book he felt was his last will and testament to the world, and throughout there are echoes of the different notes that he had struck before, and a summing-up of the faith in which he had walked. With Mr Bram Stoker he talked of the arrangements for the production of "Becket," some misprints greatly amusing him.

He was sitting with an *Iliad* on his knee and the talk naturally turned on Homer. "You know," he said to Leaf, "I never liked that theory of yours about the many poets." Leaf spoke about his "splendid translation" of the simile at the end of *Il.* VIII., three lines of which recur in *Il.* XVI., and asked him if he did not think they were far more appropriate in the latter book, and had the appearance of being borrowed in VIII. "Yes," he said, "I have always felt that, I must say": and he then enlarged for some time upon the greatness of Homer, quoting many lines from both the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

# CHAPTER XXIII.

## THE LAST CHAPTER.

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar.

Some of my father's last talks have been recorded and I quote them in brief. In his view of the Gospel of Christ he found his Christianity undisturbed by jarring of sects and of creeds; but he said, "I dread the losing hold of forms. I have expressed this in my 'Akbar.' There must be forms, yet I hate the need for so many sects and separate services."

"The life after death, Lightfoot and I agreed, is the cardinal point of Christianity. I believe that God

reveals Himself in every individual soul: and my idea of heaven is the perpetual ministry of one soul to another."

To some short notes on "In Memoriam" which he had written for future publication, one explaining Section XLIII. was added: "If the immediate life after death be only sleep, and the spirit between this life and the next should be folded like a flower in a night slumber, then the remembrance of the past might remain, as the smell and colour do in the sleeping flower; and in that case the memory of our love would last as true, and would live pure and whole within the spirit of my friend until after it was unfolded at the breaking of the morn, when the sleep was over."

Politics were to my father the good of the world, and passionately did he feel for all that concerned what he considered the welfare of the Empire. During these last months he talked with pride of the great work we had done in Egypt: and he took the greatest interest in the proposed schemes for Old Age Pensions for the poor. The mere working for party, as far as his own conviction went, was to him unintelligible, as well as the love of power and of rule for their own sakes. That all should work conscientiously and harmoniously together for the common weal, each with such differing power as had been given to each man, recognising the value of the difference, was his highest ideal of government.

While reading an article in the *Spectator* on blank verse, he observed: "I have been reading in the *Spectator* that Wordsworth and Keats are great masters of blank verse, who are also great in rhyme. Keats was not a master of blank verse. It might be true of Wordsworth at his best. Blank verse can be the finest mode of expression in our language."

He often quoted from Wordsworth now, and was

always greatly moved by "Yarrow Revisited," and particularly by the following stanza:

"And if, as Yarrow, through the woods
And down the meadow ranging,
Did meet us with unaltered face
Though we were changed and changing:
If, *then*, some natural shadows spread
Our inward prospect over,
The soul's deep valley was not slow
Its brightness to recover."

"I never could care," he said one day, "about French Alexandrines. They are so artificial. The French language lends itself much better to slighter things. Some of Béranger's Chansons are exquisite, for example his lyric to 'Le Temps,' with the chorus: 'O par pitié, lui dit ma belle, Vieillard, épargnez nos amours!' 'L'Agonie' by Sully Prudhomme I have just been reading, and think it beautiful, yet very sad; and there are things of Alfred de Musset like 'Tristesse' which seem to me perfect. I consider him a greater artist than Victor Hugo, but on smaller lines. Victor Hugo[1] is an unequal genius, sometimes sublime; he reminds one that there is only one step between the sublime and the ridiculous. 'Napoléon génait Dieu,' 'Napoleon irked God.' Was there ever such an expression?

"Among Hugo's poems I like some of the *Légende des Siècles*, and a lyric 'Gastibelza.' His finest play is *Le Roi s'amuse;* but *Mary Tudor* is a mere travesty."

"In his smaller poems such as those in *Wilhelm Meister*," he said, "Goethe shows himself to be one of

[1] In 1885 he came across Amiel's *Journal Intime*, and thought his criticisms on Hugo and literature in general good; but that the *Journal* throughout was too morbid for anything.

The modern French poets were read by him with genuine interest. The last French poems he read were by Coppée, and by Jean Aicard.

the great artists of the world. He is also a great critic: yet he always said the best he could about an author. Good critics are rarer than good authors."

Talking of localisers, "I am told by a certain gentleman that this mill is the original mill in the 'Miller's Daughter,' and that that oak was 'The Talking Oak,' and that hall 'Locksley Hall.' Never anything of the sort. Why do they give a poet no credit for imagination? The power of poetical creation seems to be utterly ignored now. This modern realism is hateful, and destroys all poetry. No man with an imagination can be tied down for his ideal. "Turner was an imaginative painter, and how absurd it would be to account for some of his works. There may be special suggestions."

Referring to the pictures at Blenheim, "I remember the very strange simile which the gardener made to me fifty years ago when he showed me over the place. We were talking of the stories told about the then Duke of Marlborough's unpopularity. He said, 'You see, Sir, when a man goes down in his luck, everyone points at him as if he were a church steeple.'

"The man himself was doubtless unaware that his comparison answered the definition of humour, the bringing together of violent contrasts."

Talking about his own life, "So much to do, so little done."

"All the magazines and daily newspapers, which pounce upon everything they can get hold of, demoralize literature. This age gives an author no time to mature his works."

"Burlesque, the true enemy of humour, the thin bastard sister of poetical caricature, would, I verily believe, from her utter want of human feeling, in a revolution be the first to dabble her hands in blood."

"I have just had a letter from a man who wants my opinion as to whether Shakespeare's plays were written

by Bacon. I feel inclined to write back: 'Sir, don't be a fool.' The way in which Bacon speaks of Love would be enough to prove that he was not Shakespeare. 'I know not how, but martial men are given to Love. I think it is but as they are given to wine, for perils commonly ask to be paid in pleasures.' How could a man with such an idea of Love write *Romeo and Juliet*?

Speaking of Walt Whitman, he said to me, "Walt neglects form altogether, but there is a fine spirit breathing through his writings. Some of them are quite unreadable from nakedness of expression."

Walt Whitman had sent my father a little book containing two addresses on *Giordano Bruno* by Daniel Brinton and Thomas Davidson. The death of Bruno was a subject which my father thought might be good for a poem[1]. Of Bruno he said, "His view of God is in some ways mine. Bruno was a poet, holding his mind ever open to new truths, and believing in an infinite universe as the necessary effect of the infinite divine Power; he was burnt as a heretic. His age did not believe in him. I think that he was misunderstood, and I should like to show him in what I conceive to be his right colours: he was the author of much of our modern philosophy. He died the most desolate of deaths."

"Spinoza is another man who has been often misunderstood. He has been called an atheist, and yet he is so full of God that he sees Him everywhere, so much so that he leaves no room for man. He was said to be 'Gottbetrunken.' He thought joy was more real than sorrow."

"Matter is a greater mystery than mind. What such a thing as a spirit is apart from God and man I have never been able to conceive. Spirit seems to me to be the reality of the world."

"Vice," he said, "sometimes appears to me as the

[1] He also thought of the death of Savonarola.

shadow of Idleness." "I do not feel horror when I see sin and misery, but shame for the sake of God."

My father often now longed for the quiet Hereafter where all would be made clear.

On Sept. 3rd he complained of weakness and of pain in his jaw, which caused a difficulty in swallowing food.

On Wednesday the 29th we telegraphed for Sir Andrew Clark. That morning I drove with him to Haslemere[1]. He would point out his old accustomed haunts saying, "I shall never walk there again."

He read Job, and St Matthew, and Miss Swanwick's new book on *Poets as the Interpreters of the Age*. Sir Andrew arrived, and did not think so badly of him as I did. He and my father fell to discussing Gray's "Elegy."

On Thursday and Friday my father had a bad sore throat; on Friday my wife read him an article in the *Times* on the colonization of Uganda, for which he asked. He looked forward to the day when South Africa would be welded into one mighty state, linked in a strict federation with England.

On Saturday and Sunday he was very drowsy.

On Sunday afternoon he was much worse, and his breathing terribly uneven.

On Monday morning at 8 o'clock he sent me for his Shakespeare. I took him Steevens' edition, *Lear*, *Cymbeline*, and *Troilus and Cressida*, three plays which he loved dearly.

He read two or three lines, and told Dr Dabbs that he should never get well again. We asked him later whether he felt better: he answered, "The doctor says I am." At his request I read some Shakespeare to him; he was most patient, and in his courteous fashion always feared that he was troubling his nurses, and expressed

[1] The last drive he took.

much anxiety for my mother's health. In the morning he told me that he was worse: he always counted the striking of the clock correctly, and asked whether it was night or morning. Dr Dabbs who had been in London for the day had seen Irving. On his return my father remarked: "What is he doing with my 'Becket'? It will be successful on the stage with Irving as Becket." He became excited towards night, saying that he must look over the poems that had been sent him, and asking me whether I had thanked an unknown author for a certain book of poems. He said to me during the night, "I make a slave of you."

On Tuesday he talked a great deal about a journey, observing that he was not fit for his journey to Farringford to-day.

At noon he called out, "Where is my Shakespeare? I must have my Shakespeare." Then he said, "I want the blinds up, I want to see the sky and the light." He repeated "The sky and the light!" It was a glorious morning, and the warm sunshine was flooding the weald of Sussex and the line of South Downs, which were seen from his window.

At 3 o'clock he was pleased with the telegram about him from the Queen, but he muttered, "O, that Press will get hold of me now!"

At five Dr Dabbs thought him better than he had been for two days; he asked Nurse Sanders how long he had been ill, and she answered, "Four days." He told Dr Dabbs that he "would take anything that he was ordered." When the nurse put the thermometer under his arm, she touched some nerve, and he said that a "most beautiful vision of blue and other colours had passed over his eyes."

At seven he asked me, "Have I not been walking with Gladstone in the garden, and showing him my trees?" I answered, "No." He replied, "Are you sure?"

On Wednesday he wanted to know whether his book had come, probably meaning the proofs of his new volume. I put them into his hand, and I kissed it, and he said, "Sir Andrew did that." He begged for his Shakespeare again. About 10.30 he called aloud, "Hallam," as I was leaving the room to fetch my mother. I questioned him as to whether he felt free from pain: he answered, "Quite, but I shall not get better."

At 2 o'clock he again asked for his Shakespeare and lay with his hand resting on it open, and tried to read it. Sir Andrew Clark had arrived from Christchurch: my father knew him, and said distinctly, "This is the worst attack I have had," and added, "I hope that you are not tired," for he had heard that Sir Andrew had started at seven o'clock.

All the afternoon he was much the same, occasionally saying a word or two to us, and hearing every sound, when he would open his eyes wide, look round the room, then close them again.

He had been talking to Dr Dabbs about death, and about "What a shadow this life is, and how men cling to what is after all but a small part of the great world's life." Then Dr Dabbs told him (for his interest was always keen "in the lot of lowly men") of an incident that had lately happened. "A villager, ninety years old, was dying, and had so much pined to see his old bedridden wife once more that they had carried her to where he lay. He pressed his shrunken hand upon her hand, and in a husky voice said to her, 'Come soon,' and soon after passed away himself." My father murmured "True Faith"; and the tears were in his voice. Suddenly he gathered himself together and spoke one word about himself to the doctor, "Death?" Dr Dabbs bowed his head, and he said, "That's well."

His last food was taken at a quarter to four, and he tried to read, but could not. He exclaimed, "I have

opened it." Whether this referred to the Shakespeare, opened by him at

"Hang there like fruit, my soul,
Till the tree die[1],"

which he always called among the tenderest lines in Shakespeare: or whether one of his last poems, of which he was fond, was running through his head I cannot tell:

Fear not thou the hidden purpose of that Power which alone is great,
Nor the myriad world, His shadow, nor the silent Opener of the Gate.

He then spoke his last words, a farewell blessing, to my mother and myself.

For the next hours the full moon flooded the room and the great landscape outside with light; and we watched in solemn stillness. His patience and quiet strength had power upon those who were nearest and dearest to him; we felt thankful for the love and the utter peace of it all; and his own lines of comfort from "In Memoriam" were strongly borne in upon us. He was quite restful, holding my wife's hand, and, as he was passing away, I spoke over him his own prayer, "God accept him! Christ receive him!" because I knew that he would have wished it.

I give the medical bulletin published next day by Dr Dabbs:

The tendency to fatal syncope may be said to have really commenced about 10 a.m. on Wednesday, and on Thursday, October 6th, at 1.35 a.m., the great poet breathed his last. Nothing could have been more striking than the scene during the last few hours. On the bed a figure of breathing marble, flooded and bathed in the light of the full moon streaming through the oriel window; his hand clasping the Shakespeare which he had

[1] *Cymbeline*, Act v. Sc. v.

asked for but recently, and which he had kept by him to the end; the moonlight, the majestic figure as he lay there, "drawing thicker breath," irresistibly brought to our minds his own "Passing of Arthur."

Some friends and the servants came to see him. He looked very grand and peaceful with the deep furrows of thought almost smoothed away, and the old clergyman of Lurgashall stood by the bed with his hands raised, and said, "Lord Tennyson, God has taken you, who made you a prince of men! Farewell!"

We placed *Cymbeline* with him, and a laurel wreath from Virgil's tomb, and wreaths of roses, the flower which he loved above all flowers, and some of his Alexandrian laurel, the poet's laurel. On the evening of the 11th the coffin was set upon our waggonette, made beautiful with stag's-horn moss and the scarlet Lobelia Cardinalis; and draped with the pall, woven by working men and women of the north, and embroidered by the cottagers of Keswick; and then we covered him with the wreaths and crosses of flowers sent from all parts of Great Britain. The coachman, who had been for more than thirty years my father's faithful servant, led the horse.

Ourselves, the villagers, and the school children followed over the moor through our lane towards a glorious sunset, and later through Haslemere under brilliant starlight.

The coffin was taken to Westminster Abbey[1], and, at

[1] The question of the burial in the Abbey or at Farringford was left to the decision of the Dean. My mother telegraphed to him: "Decide as you think best. If it is thought better, let him have the flag of England on his coffin, and rest in the churchyard of the dear place where his happiest days have been passed. Only, let the flag represent the feeling of the beloved Queen, and the nation, and the empire he loved so dearly." Owing to his detestation of the gloomy pomp of funerals, black plumes, black coaches, etc., the coffin was conveyed from Waterloo Station to the Abbey on a simple, covered van.

the request of the Prince of Wales, covered with a Union Jack—lent by Lord Methuen and the brigade of Guards quartered in London. He was laid that night in the chapel of St Faith.

On Wednesday the 12th the funeral procession was formed in the cloisters: the pall-bearers being the Duke of Argyll, Lord Dufferin, Lord Selborne, Lord Rosebery, Mr Jowett, Mr Lecky, Mr Froude, Lord Salisbury, Dr Butler (Trinity College, Cambridge), the United States Minister, Sir James Paget and Lord Kelvin. The Abbey was crowded from end to end by a vast multitude of mourners. The nave was lined by men of the Balaclava Light Brigade, by some of the London Rifle Volunteers, and by the boys of the Gordon Boys' Home, in token of their gratitude for what he had done for each and all of them. Two anthems were sung: both were settings of words by my father; one, "Crossing the Bar," by Dr Bridge; the other, "Silent Voices," a melody in F minor by my mother, and set by her at my father's express desire. Nothing could have been more simple and majestic than the funeral service[1]: and the tributes of sympathy which we received from many countries and from all creeds and classes were not only remarkable for their universality, but for their depth of feeling. What I said then I can only repeat: "God bless all for the love and reverence shown to the memory of him who above all things loved Love."

On God and Godlike men we build our trust.
Hush, the Dead March wails in the people's ears:
The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs and tears:
The black earth yawns: the mortal disappears;
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust;
He is gone who seem'd so great.—

[1] Many were seen reading "In Memoriam" while waiting before the service.

Gone; but nothing can bereave him
Of the force he made his own
Being here, and we believe him
Something far advanced in State,
And that he wears a truer crown
Than any wreath that man can weave him.
Speak no more of his renown,
Lay your earthly fancies down,
And in the vast cathedral leave him.
God accept him, Christ receive him.

Next to Robert Browning, and in front of the Chaucer monument, my father was laid: and for weeks after the funeral multitudes passed by the new-made grave in a never-ceasing procession. Against the pillar near the grave has been placed the well-known bust by Woolner[1].

[1] This replica by the sculptor himself, from the original at Trinity College, Cambridge (1857), was given me by Mr Charles Jenner of Portobello, Midlothian. Another replica is in existence and is the property of Mrs Charles Buxton. It may be remembered that Woolner executed the earliest medallion in 1850, the second a profile in 1856, the third a three-quarters head in 1867. We have always thought that the finest work of art and the best likeness was the bust done in 1857. The only other bust (from life) of my father was made by Woolner in 1873.

The portraits by G. F. Watts, R.A. are:

| | Painted in |
|---|---|
| A profile, gone to Melbourne. | 1856 |
| A three-quarters, owned by Lady Henry Somerset. | 1858-9 |
| Another, owned by Sir William Bowman. | 1859 |
| A full face, in the National Portrait Gallery. | 1865 |
| A three-quarters, presented to Trinity College, Cambridge, by G. F. Watts. | 1891 |

A replica of this last was painted by Mr Watts for the bequest which he has made to the nation. The portraits by other artists have already been named.

[It has taken me four years to complete this Memoir of my father. Throughout, my mother's assistance has been invaluable. She passed away peacefully at Aldworth, August 10th, 1896 (having entered her eighty-fourth year, the age at which my father died), and we laid her to rest in the quiet churchyard at Freshwater. A few days before her death she expressed her satisfaction that she had lived long enough to help me to correct the proofs for the press.

On the tablet, erected in the church to the memory of my father and mother, is the following inscription :

IN LOVING MEMORY
OF

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON

WHOSE HAPPIEST DAYS WERE PASSED AT FARRINGFORD
IN THIS PARISH

BORN AUG 6TH 1809
DIED OCT 6TH 1892
BURIED IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY OCT 12TH 1892

SPEAK, LIVING VOICE! WITH THEE DEATH IS NOT DEATH;
THY LIFE OUTLIVES THE LIFE OF DUST AND BREATH.

ALSO IN LOVING MEMORY
OF HIS WIFE

EMILY LADY TENNYSON

BORN JULY 9TH 1813
DIED AUGUST 10TH 1896

"DEAR, NEAR AND TRUE, NO TRUER TIME HIMSELF
CAN PROVE YOU, THO' HE MAKE YOU EVERMORE
DEARER AND NEARER."]

# Crossing the Bar.

Sunset & evening star,
And one clear call for me.
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound & foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight & evening bell,
And after that the dark:
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark:

For tho' from out our borne of Time & Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face,
When I have crost the bar.

*From the Original MS.*

# THE QUEEN

These letters, which I have the Queen's gracious permission to publish, will, I am sure, be read with heartfelt interest: giving as they do fresh proof of Her Majesty's deep sympathy with her subjects, and of my father's earnest and chivalrous devotion to her.

*From the Queen.*

WINDSOR CASTLE,
*Feb. 26th*, 1873.

Though Lady Augusta Stanley has already conveyed the expression of the Queen's warmest thanks for and high admiration of the beautiful Epilogue[1] he has so kindly inscribed to herself, she wishes to repeat again herself to Mr Tennyson these feelings on the occasion of the arrival of the copy of the very fine new edition of the "Idylls of the King."

Pray accept the renewed thanks of the Queen for the noble heart-stirring words addressed to her, and which were a complete surprise. It would give the Queen much pleasure could she, some day, when he is within reach of Windsor, show him the Mausoleum

[1] Epilogue to the "Idylls of the King."

she has raised over the earthly remains of her dear Husband, whom he knew how to appreciate, and so beautifully described, as she feels sure he would admire it and think it worthy of him who wore

"The white flower of a blameless life."

She also hopes that Mr Tennyson will not find Osborne too far for a drive from Freshwater.

*From my father (after a visit to Osborne).*

*August*, 1883.

DEAR AND HONOURED LADY,

MY QUEEN,

Your Majesty's letter made me glad that even in so small a matter I may have been of some service to you. I will not say that "I am loyal," or that "Your Majesty is gracious," for these are old hackneyed terms used or abused by every courtier, but I will say that during our conversation I felt the touch of that true friendship which binds human beings together, whether they be kings or cobblers.

Madam, when I left your presence, those lines of our Shakespeare in his *Henry V.* came across my memory,

"O hard condition twin-born with greatness,
* * * * *
What infinite heart's-ease must kings neglect
Which private men enjoy."

So it is, but I trust that in spite of the loneliness of the throne and your Majesty's many losses, and this latest[1] of your faithful servant, the return of your beloved daughter may be of some solace to you. I

[1] Death of John Brown.

remember dear Princess Alice bringing her to me in the drawing-room at Osborne—a fair-haired child whom it was a pleasure to look upon.

My wife is very grateful for your Majesty's most kind remembrance, and

I am always your affectionate servant,

A. TENNYSON.

*From my father.*

(*After our voyage to Copenhagen.*)

ALDWORTH, HASLEMERE,
*Sept. 22nd*, 1883.

MADAM,

Our cruise was so unpremeditated as to direction that my wife could not forward your Majesty's letter to me, but could only place it in my hand just after my arrival at home yesterday evening.

I need not say that I have great pleasure in learning that the quotations suggested by me have been approved by your Majesty[1]. I feared that they were too elliptical.

The sight of the Princess of Wales in the midst of her own family, all of whom seem so royally simple and kindly, was, I think, the pleasantest thing that occurred in our whole voyage, delightful as it was; for the longer I live the more I value kindness and simplicity among the sons and daughters of men.

Believe me, dear Madam, your Majesty's

loyal and affectionate servant,

A. TENNYSON.

[1] Lines on a tablet in memory of John Brown, the Queen's Highland attendant.

*My father's letter to the Queen, accepting the Peerage.*

*Sept.* 1883.

MADAM,

I have learned from Mr Gladstone your Majesty's gracious intention toward myself, and I ask to be allowed to express to your Majesty herself my grateful acknowledgments.

You, Madam, who are so full of sympathy for your subjects, will, I am sure, understand me when I say that the knowledge of your Majesty's approval of what I have been enabled to do, is, as far as I myself am concerned, all that I desire.

This public mark of your Majesty's esteem, which recognizes in my person the power of literature in this age of the world, cannot, however, fail to be gratifying to my nearest and dearest.

Believe me, dear Madam,

Your Majesty's loyal

and affectionate servant,

A. TENNYSON.

*From the Queen.*

BALMORAL CASTLE,
*Oct. 9th*, 1883.

DEAR MR TENNYSON,

I thank you sincerely for your two last kind letters.

It affords me much pleasure to confer on my Poet Laureate, who is so universally admired and respected, a mark of my recognition of the great services he has rendered to literature, which has so great an influence on the world at large.

How I wish you could suggest means of crushing those horrible publications whose object is to promulgate scandal and calumny which they invent themselves!

Hoping to see you in the course of the next few months,

Believe me always yours most sincerely,

V. R. I.

The following lines on the Duke of Albany (who died in March 1884) were sent by my father to the Queen.

PRINCE LEOPOLD.

*An Epitaph.*

Early-wise, and pure, and true,
Prince, whose Father lived in you,
If you could speak, would you not say:
"I seem, but am not, far away;
Wherefore should your eyes be dim?
I am here again with him.
O Mother-Queen, and weeping Wife,
The Death for which you mourn is Life."

*From the Queen.*

(*After the death of the Duke of Albany.*)

WINDSOR CASTLE,
*March 31st*, 1884.

DEAR LORD TENNYSON,

I truly value your very kind words. My sorrows are many and great!

Almost all I needed most to lean on—and who helped and comforted—are taken from me! But tho' *all happiness* is at an end for me in *this* world, I am

ready to fight on, praying that I may be supported in bearing my heavy cross—and in trying to be of use and help to this poor, dear young widow of my darling child[1], whose life, which was so bright and happy for barely two years, has been utterly crushed! But she bears it admirably, with the most gentle patience and courageous and unmurmuring resignation.

All these terrible sorrows show us however, truly and really, that here is not our abiding home.

Still it is very hard to see such a young life, so full of talent, so gifted, and so useful, cut off so soon, and to feel that all the care and anxiety, which under Providence enabled him to attain full manhood, was unavailing at last.

I am well, and while I live shall devote myself to the good of my dear Country, which has on all occasions of sorrow or joy, but especially the former, shown such sympathy with me!

Ever yours truly,

V. R. I.

*From the Princess Louise (Marchioness of Lorne).*

WINDSOR CASTLE,
*April 12th*, 1884.

DEAR LORD TENNYSON,

The Queen desires me to send you the enclosed letter (dated March 31st), and to say that she is distressed to find that through some oversight of one of her gentlemen, owing to the great press of business, the letter was misdirected; and thus the delay.

The Queen was much touched by your beautiful lines, and had hoped you would have received her letter some days ago.

[1] The Duke of Albany.

The Queen is well, but the blow is a heavy one, and only by degrees will she realise what she has lost in that beloved son, who has been taken from her.

I do not like to tell you of my own sorrow. I have lost the truest and dearest friend (besides the best of brothers) I ever had, the joy and object of a lifetime.

Believe me yours sincerely,

LOUISE.

*From the Queen.*

OSBORNE.

DEAR LORD TENNYSON,

Though a very humble and unpretending author I send you my new book, which perhaps you may like to glance at. Its only merit is its simplicity and truth.

What a warm winter we have had!

Hoping that you are well, and wishing to be kindly remembered to Lady Tennyson,

Ever yours truly,

V. R. I.

*From my father.*

FARRINGFORD.

MADAM,

This beautiful morning has brought me the pleasant surprise of your Majesty's most gracious letter and gift[1].

I need scarcely assure you, Madam, of my gratitude at receiving the volume from your Majesty's own hands.

If I may venture to say so, I am certain beforehand of finding the lofty and tender sentiments and the hearty

[1] Second series of *Journal of our Life in the Highlands.*

enjoyment of nature, expressed in pure English, which cannot fail to make a book interesting, apart from the special interest which must of necessity belong to this particular volume.

My wife is most grateful for your Majesty's gracious remembrance.

Allow me, Madam, to subscribe myself

Your Majesty's devoted and affectionate servant,

TENNYSON.

*From my father.*

FARRINGFORD,
*July*, 1885.

MADAM,

I am honoured by your Majesty's most gracious letter, and, if I am fortunate enough to write what your Majesty would have me write[1], and as your Majesty would have it written, I shall have true pleasure in having written.

The account of the young Prince[2] is very interesting, and your Majesty may well believe that in him another will be added to your "army of Heroes."

England, whose heart has rarely, if ever, beaten more warmly for her soldiers, nor with better cause than now, will rejoice that the Princess, whom she has loved as the devoted daughter, has every prospect of being the happy wife of a soldier Prince, and of bringing a new solace to the life which year by year becomes more precious to the whole Empire.

Your Majesty's affectionate servant,

TENNYSON.

[1] Dedication of "The Defence of Lucknow."
[2] Prince Henry of Battenberg.

*From the Queen.*

WINDSOR CASTLE,
*July 8th*, 1885.

DEAR LORD TENNYSON,

I am so grateful and touched by your kind letter.

It would give me the greatest of pleasures if you would come over for the wedding in our village church[1], but I *fear* you will not do that! But pray come and see me when all is quiet again.

You will understand that Prince Henry, though an excellent soldier, has never been in the field as he was too young, the last German war being fifteen years ago, and he is only twenty-six.

You may also like to know that she will be followed by her ten nieces as bridesmaids, viz. my eldest son's three girls, Louise, Victoria, and Maud of Wales, dear Alice's two motherless girls, Irene and Alice of Hesse, Princess Christian's two, Victoria and Louise of Holstein, and my son Alfred's three, Marie, Victoria, and Alexandra Marie of Edinburgh.

I am yours very truly,

V. R. I.

[The Queen in a postscript speaks of "the death of that noble hero Gordon."]

*From my father.*

*July 9th*, 1885.

Your Majesty is most gracious, but I think that blind [short-sighted] as I am, and, I fear, growing blinder, I am best away from the wedding, and I would

[1] Whippingham.

pray to be excused, except that your Majesty had kindly anticipated my excuse for absence from a ceremony which cannot fail to be beautiful and touching.

Should the poem, which I send[1], be approved of by your Majesty and the Princess, shall I have some copies printed?

Very often in the sorrowful period through which we have passed, we have thought of what the Queen must have suffered.

It cheers one that the present Prime Minister[2] speaks only of the interests of the Empire, leaving at all events in abeyance the fatal cry of party. Change must needs come in all human things, but I wish that statesmen would oftener remember the saying of Bacon:—"Mere innovations should imitate the work of time, which innovateth slowly but surely" (or some such words). We might then have such stability in our policy as is possible to our poor human nature.

I fully sympathize with your Majesty's feelings for our great simple soldier-hero Gordon, and I rejoice that the Mansion House Committee have adopted, as the National Memorial, the scheme proposed by myself and my son, which had its origin in a conversation with Gordon.

Believe me your Majesty's

Loyal and affectionate servant,

TENNYSON.

[1] On the marriage of Prince Henry of Battenberg and Princess Beatrice.
[2] Lord Salisbury.

*From my father.*

*July 20th*, 1885.

MADAM,

I have sent your Majesty one hundred copies of the poem, printed. I am glad your Princess approves it, for I, who enter my 77th year on the 6th August, might well give in to the fear that the power of poetry was faded or fading in me. To the Royal bride the old poet sends his blessing; and for her he, and his, wish "Queen's weather" on the 23rd.

Your Majesty's loyal and devoted servant,

TENNYSON.

Mr Gladstone differs in *many* of his political views from myself.

*From the Queen.*

OSBORNE,
*Aug. 7th*, 1885.

DEAR LORD TENNYSON,

I was not unmindful of yesterday's anniversary, and would wish to offer my warm good wishes on the return of your natal day.

It was also my son Alfred's and my son-in-law Lorne's birthday, and there was always a gathering at Osborne Cottage of my children, grandchildren and relations, and, as I gazed on the happy young couple, and on my two sons Alfred and Arthur and their bonnie bairns, I could not but feel sad in thinking that their hour of trial might come, and earnestly prayed God would spare my sweet Beatrice and the husband she so truly loves and confides in, for long, long to each other.

Till sixty-one no real inroad of any kind had been made in our circle, and how heavy has God's hand been since then on me!

Mother, husband, children, truest friends, all have been taken from me, and yet I must "still endure," and I shall try to do so. Your beautiful lines have been greatly admired.

I wish you could have *seen* the wedding, for everyone says it was the prettiest they ever saw. The simple, pretty, little village church, all decorated with flowers, the sweet young bride, the handsome young husband, the ten bridesmaids, six of them quite children with flowing fair hair, the brilliant sunshine and the blue sea, all made up pictures not to be forgotten.

Believe me always yours affectionately,

V. R. I.

*From my father.*

ALDWORTH,
*Aug. 9th*, 1885.

MADAM,

Tho' feasts and flowers seem to me only properly to belong to the birthdays of the young, and tho' I myself always pass my own over in silence, yet believe me most thoroughly grateful for your Majesty's gracious and kindly congratulations.

As to the sufferings of this momentary life, we can but trust that in some after-state, when we see clearer, we shall thank the Supreme Power for having made us, thro' these, higher and greater beings.

Still it surely cannot be unlawful to pray that our children, and our children's children, may pass thro' smoother waters to the other shore.

The wedding must have been beautiful, the Peace of Heaven seemed on the day.

* * * * * *

Your Majesty's affectionate subject,

TENNYSON.

*From the Queen.*

OSBORNE,
*April 16th*, 1886.

DEAR LORD TENNYSON,

I cannot refrain from writing to express my deep concern and true sympathy with you and Lady Tennyson, who I know must be spared as much anxiety as possible at the present moment when you are in such trouble about your dear son[1].

I am indeed grieved beyond measure for you and your dear wife, and for poor little Eleanor, whom I have known from her earliest childhood.

God grant that you may yet get better news!

Beatrice shares my feelings, having known Eleanor so well.

I cannot in this letter allude to politics, but I know what your feelings must be.

Believe me always yours truly,

V. R. I.

*From my father.*

FARRINGFORD, FRESHWATER,
*April*, 1886.

MADAM,

I beg to offer your Majesty the assurance of my own and my wife's heartfelt gratitude for your Majesty's most welcome letter of sympathy with us.

[1] The illness of my brother in India.

Our latest telegram was from Colombo, "no improvement"; but in this pause, as it were between Life and Death, since your Majesty touches upon the disastrous policy of the day, I may say, that I wish I may be in my own grave beyond sight and hearing, when an English army fires upon the Loyalists of Ulster.

Believe me always your Majesty's

Loyal and affectionate subject,

TENNYSON.

*From the Queen.*

(*After the death of Lionel.*)

OSBORNE,
*April 25th*, 1886.

DEAR LORD TENNYSON,

I wish I could express in words how *deeply* and truly I feel for you in this hour of heavy affliction!

You, who have written such words of comfort for others, will I am sure feel the comfort of them again *in* yourself. But it is *terrible* to lose one's grown up children when one is no longer young oneself, and to see, as I have done, and you will do now, the sore stricken young widow of one's beloved son!

I will not weary you or intrude on your grief by words of consolation, which in fact *can* offer none. But I say from the depth of a heart, which has suffered cruelly, and lost almost all it cared for and loved best, I *feel* for you; I know what you and your dear wife are suffering, and I pray God to support you.

Pray let your son Hallam write me a few words by the messenger, who takes this over, and say how you and Lady Tennyson are.

My dear Beatrice grieves deeply for her former playmate, poor dear Eleanor, and is very anxious to hear how she is.

Ever yours affectionately,

V. R. I.

I am very grateful for your kind letter.

*From the Queen to Hallam Tennyson.*

OSBORNE, *April 26th*, 1886.

The Queen is very thankful to Mr Tennyson for his kind sad letter, and for the enclosure from Lord Dufferin.

It is terribly sad.

She trusts his dear mother will be mercifully supported, and that fresh news will soon be received from poor Eleanor, and that the first meeting will not be too trying for her and for Lord and Lady Tennyson.

The Queen feels deeply for Mr Tennyson, to whom the loss of his only brother must be a heavy blow, and lasting sorrow.

*From my father.*

*March 12th*, 1887 (*the Jubilee Year*).

MADAM,

I am grateful for your Majesty's most kind letter... I do indeed feel how the sense of loneliness may oppress your Majesty in the midst of these loud rejoicings. "Ihr Beifall selbst macht meinem Herzen bang," as Goethe says in his preface to *Faust*. The multitude are loud, but *They* are silent. Yet, if the dead, as I have often felt, tho' silent, be more living than the living;—and linger about the planet in which

their earth-life was passed—then *they*, while we are lamenting that they are not at our side, may still be with us; and the husband, the daughter, and the son, lost by your Majesty, may rejoice when the people shout the name of their Queen.

TENNYSON.

*From the Queen.*

WINDSOR CASTLE,
*May 14th*, 1887.

DEAR LORD TENNYSON,

I am anxious to tell you that your beautiful Ode[1] was performed at Buckingham Palace on the 11th with a full Orchestra. It was conducted by Mr Stanford himself. We greatly admired the music, which was very descriptive and well adapted to the words, and it was extremely well executed. I wish you could have heard it.

We have just returned from opening the People's Palace. There was an enormous crowd everywhere, and much enthusiasm and loyalty.

I must thank you for your last kind letter, and hope that you are well, as also Lady Tennyson and your family.

Believe me always yours affectionately,

V. R. I.

[1] "Jubilee Ode."

*From my father to Princess Beatrice (Princess Henry of Battenberg).*

FARRINGFORD, FRESHWATER,
*Feb.* 15*th*, 1888.

MADAM,

I did not know, till after your Royal Highness had left us yesterday, when I opened the parcel, that the memorial of the Jubilee Year was the photograph of the Queen. If I did not express my loyal thanks to your Royal Highness sufficiently by word of mouth for the kind and gracious gift, allow me to write them here.

Yesterday's visit will always be a pleasant memory to me, and I trust your Royal Highness has already forgiven me for introducing you to such low company, as my old "Spinster and her Cats[1]."

With our dutiful remembrances,

I am

Your Royal Highness' faithful servant,

TENNYSON.

*From the Queen.*

OSBORNE,
*Aug.* 9*th*, 1889.

DEAR LORD TENNYSON,

Though three days late, I hope I may still offer my best wishes for your eightieth birthday, and my hope that many more anniversaries may follow.

My time has been so much taken up by my grandson, the Emperor of Germany's visit, that I have hardly been

[1] Read to Prince and Princess Henry of Battenberg when they visited us at Farringford in February, 1888.

able to write, but my thoughts were with you on a day which is dear to me from being the birthdays of my second son, and son-in-law Lord Lorne.

My grandson the Emperor of Germany's visit went off very well, and much cordiality between the two countries was shown on both sides.

Trusting that you are now quite recovered from your long illness,

Believe me always yours affectionately,

V. R. I.

Pray remember me to Lady Tennyson.

*From my father.*

ALDWORTH, HASLEMERE,
*Aug.* 1889.

MADAM,

Your Majesty has given yet another proof of that universal kindness (which has rejoiced so many hearts), by remembering your old Poet's birthday, and making time to tell him so in the midst of almost overwhelming work.

That the Emperor's visit has passed off so well must be a source of thankfulness, not only to your Majesty but to the two nations, nations too closely allied by the subtle sympathy of kindred not to be either true brothers or deadly foes.

As brothers what might they not do for the world?

May those so near and dear to your Majesty as son and son-in-law find every 6th of August happier and happier to themselves, in the consciousness of good achieved.

I have had nine months of a most painful and

depressing illness. My doctors say that such an attack of rheumatic gout at my age very frequently is fatal. I am much better now, but possibly I shall never be quite the same man again, though always the same, I trust, in my devotion to the Queen, and my loyalty to her Throne of England.

TENNYSON.

My wife is most grateful for your Majesty's most gracious remembrance.

*From the Queen.*

OSBORNE, *Feb. 9th*, 1891.

DEAR LORD TENNYSON,

I venture to send you two photographs of the Tableaux Vivants of "Elaine," which your son will have told you of, and which I hope you will like.

Of course the want of colour prevents the effect being as fine as it was, but I think they are very good.

Our stage is very small, so that it cramps large groups. Our new room will be finished next year, when I hope we may be able to represent larger Tableaux, or at least to bring in more people without crowding.

Hoping that you and Lady Tennyson are well,

Believe me ever yours affectionately,

VICTORIA R. I.

*From my father.*

*Feb. 9th*, 1891.

MADAM,

I am very grateful for your Majesty's kind letter, and for the photographs of the Tableaux. That of Elaine in the boat seems beautiful, and Arthur's court

with the splendid colouring of old armour must have been very effective.

May I be allowed to add how much my son and his wife felt the kindness of their reception at Osborne, and how much they enjoyed the Plays?

I am rejoiced to hear from them that your Majesty is looking so well.

With the loyal devotion of my wife and myself,

I am always your Majesty's

Ever affectionate servant,

TENNYSON.

The following inscription was sent by my father for the Prayer-book presented to the Queen by her children on the fiftieth anniversary of her wedding:

Remembering him who waits thee far away,
And with thee, Mother, taught us first to pray,
Accept on this your golden bridal day
The Book of Prayer.

*From the Queen.*

OSBORNE, *Feb.* 10*th*, 1891.

DEAR LORD TENNYSON,

How kind it is of you to have written those beautiful lines, and to have sent the telegram for this ever dear day, which I will never allow to be considered a sad day. The reflected light of the sun which has set still remains! It is full of pathos, but also full of joyful gratitude, and he, who has left me nearly 30 years ago, surely blesses me still!

Your son, whose acquaintance I was much pleased to make, was desirous of getting the photographs of

our Tableaux, which he saw, and I send a set to-day for your acceptance, hoping you may be interested by them.

I hope that you are well, and that I may some day see you again.

Asking you to remember me kindly to Lady Tennyson and your son, believe me always

Yours affectionately, VICTORIA R. I.

*From my father.*

FARRINGFORD, *Feb.* 10*th*, 1891.

MADAM,

I am glad that your Majesty did not consider my lines out of harmony with the sacred day. No words could more entirely express the feelings which of right belong to it than your Majesty's. The photographs of the Tableaux are most interesting. They will, I need not say, ever be highly prized, both for the giver's sake, and as a memorial of the pleasant days my son spent at Osborne, when his Queen was so gracious and kind to him. My wife and son send their most loyal duty.

I am ever your Majesty's

Grateful and affectionate servant,

TENNYSON.

*From my father.*

(*After the death of the Duke of Clarence.*)

FARRINGFORD, *Jan.* 1892.

MADAM,

I venture to write, but I do not know how to express the profound sympathy of myself and my family with the great sorrow, which has befallen your Majesty and your children.

I know that your Majesty has a perfect trust in the Love and Wisdom which order the circumstances of our life, and in this alone is there comfort.

I am always your Majesty's affectionate servant,

TENNYSON.

*From the Marquis of Lorne.*

OSBORNE, *Jan. 28th*, 1892.

MY DEAR LORD TENNYSON,

The Queen was very much touched and very much pleased with what you wrote and sent to her[1].

She is specially anxious that you should not think that the delay, that has arisen in her acknowledgment, has been owing to any want of feeling; but it has come through want of time, for since her loss she has been overwhelmed with work. As soon as the touching lines came, she spoke with tears in her eyes of their beauty, and I know that she felt much your goodness in sending them, and that they were really a comfort to her.

Believe me, dear Lord Tennyson,

Yours very truly, LORNE.

*From the Queen.*

OSBORNE, *Jan. 28th*, 1892.

The Queen is very deeply touched by the beautiful lines Lord Tennyson has so kindly written (and sent) on this terrible tragedy, which is a real misfortune.

She thanks him warmly for writing and sending them. They are most affecting. But was there ever a more terrible contrast?

[1] The lines on the death of the Duke of Clarence.

A wedding with bright hopes turned into a funeral in the very chapel where the former was to have taken place.

The Queen hopes that Lord Tennyson is well in the midst of so much illness everywhere.

She keeps well, but she is deeply grieved by the loss of her dearly loved grandson.

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*From the Queen to Hallam Tennyson.*

BALMORAL CASTLE, *Oct. 6th*, 1892.

The Queen thanks Mr Tennyson again for his very touching telegram, describing the passing away of his beloved father, whose latter years he soothed and sustained with so much devotion. That great spirit now knows what he so often reflected on and pondered over.

The Queen deeply laments and mourns her noble Poet Laureate, who will be so universally regretted, but he has left undying works behind him which we shall ever treasure.

He was so very kind and full of sympathy to the Queen, who alas! never saw him again after his last visit to Osborne.

Most deeply does the Queen feel for Lady Tennyson, whose delicate health will, the Queen hopes, not suffer from this great shock. The blank will be so terrible.

The Queen prays earnestly that they may all be sustained in this hour of grief and bereavement.

What was the cause of this fatal termination of his very short illness?

*From the Queen to Hallam Tennyson.*

BALMORAL CASTLE, *Oct. 19th*, 1892.

I am much touched by your two kind letters, and the copy of the beautiful lines[1], which I conclude were the last he ever wrote.

Everything must have been most touching and beautiful, and worthy of what the great poet was; the "passing away" with Shakespeare in his hand, the *very* simple and affecting departure from his own beloved home, and the last sad ceremony when the mortal part of this great man was laid in its final resting-place.

I am thankful that your dear mother is as well as could be expected, but the blank, which for some time must only increase, will be terrible.

May I ask who Miss Maud Tennyson[2] is, who has been mentioned several times?

I am anxious to have a bust of your dear father at Windsor, and would like to know which is the best to have copied.

I found this short account of your father's visit to me at Osborne in 1883, which I had hastily written down in my Journal, and have had it copied out, thinking it might perhaps interest you. Alas! I never saw him again. He was several times ill, and the weather prevented his moving, so that I had not the pleasure and comfort of again conversing with him once more.

Hoping to see you when I return south,

Believe me always yours truly,

V. R. I.

[1] "The Silent Voices."

[2] Daughter of my uncle Horatio Tennyson.

*Extract from the Queen's private Journal.*

OSBORNE, *Tuesday, Aug. 7th,* 1883.

After luncheon saw the great Poet Tennyson in dearest Albert's room for nearly an hour; and most interesting it was. He is grown very old, his eyesight much impaired. But he was very kind. Asked him to sit down. He talked of the many friends he had lost, and what it would be if he did not feel and know that there was another world, where there would be no partings; and then he spoke with horror of the unbelievers and philosophers who would make you believe there was no other world, no Immortality, who tried to explain all away in a miserable manner. We agreed that were such a thing possible, God, Who is Love, would be far more cruel than any human being. He quoted some well-known lines from Goethe whom he so much admires. Spoke of the poor Lily of Hanover[1] so kindly, asked after my Godchildren. He spoke of Ireland, and the wickedness of ill-using poor animals: "I am afraid I think the world is darkened; I dare say it will brighten again."

I told him what a comfort "In Memoriam" had again been to me, which pleased him; but he said I could not believe the number of shameful letters of abuse he had received about it. Incredible! When I took leave of him, I thanked him for his kindness, and said I needed it, for I had gone thro' much, and he said, "You are so alone on that terrible height; it is terrible. I've only a year or two to live, but I shall be happy to do anything for you I can. Send for me whenever you like."

I thanked him warmly.

[1] Princess Frederica of Hanover.

## TENNYSON, BY THE LATE EARL OF SELBORNE.

BLACKMOOR, PETERSFIELD,
*July 18th*, 1893.

Lord Tennyson realized to me, more than anyone else whom I have known, the "heroic" idea. Even in person, he was such a man as I could conceive Thiodolf the Icelander, the hero of that romance of De la Motte Fouqué which Sir Walter Scott most admired, to have been, when no longer young. The consciousness, which he could not but have, of his great vocation, and of the work which he had done, was tempered by a vein of modesty, almost childlike. His domestic affections were very strong; and he had a happy home, in which the influence of others told upon him, hardly less (I think) than his own did on them. Wordsworth's wish, that his "days" should be "bound each to each in natural piety," seemed to be perfectly fulfilled in him. It was easy to see that he never forgot the influences which surrounded him in childhood, and never lost the habit of observing and sympathizing with Nature, which colours much of his poetry. There was nothing in him conventional or commonplace, nothing artificial or affected. If he spoke of or recited his own poetry, as he often did among friends, it was from pure kindness, because he knew that they wished for it. But his interests were not in his own vocation only; he thought much on religious, scientific and political questions, and expressed freely in conversation the opinions which he had formed on them. I did not see everything in exactly the same light that he did; but everything which he said had the stamp of reality, and it was wholesome and refreshing to listen to him. He looked at questions of truth and falsehood, of right and wrong, with a vision undisturbed by false sentiment, and free from the distortions of party spirit

and personal sympathies or antipathies. He was noble, simple, manly, reverent as well as strong, with a frankness which might at times seem rough, but which was never inconsistent with the finest courtesy and the gentlest heart. I do not think I could better describe the impression which he made upon me by any multiplication of words. He was great in himself, as well as in his work; the foremost man, in my eyes, of all his generation; and entitled to be ranked with the greatest of the generations before him.

SELBORNE.

## PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS, BY THE LATE MASTER OF BALLIOL[1].

BALLIOL COLLEGE.

It is nearly forty years since I first made the acquaintance of Lord Tennyson. He was at that time living in the neighbourhood of Twickenham, and had recently married, and I was staying with Temple[2] at Kneller Hall, which in those days, was the scene of many a happy gathering of Dr Temple's old friends. He and I were invited to go and dine with the poet. There were no ladies present, but several of his Cambridge contemporaries; among them I remember particularly James Spedding and Tom Taylor. Our host was very cheerful and hospitable, and though I cannot remember what was said, I have a recollection that the dinner was what young men would call very jolly.

Tennyson was already a great man. Since the publication of the two volumes of poems more than ten years previously, he had shot up like a rocket, and, after the death of Wordsworth, there was no living poet who could be compared with him. In making his acquaintance we had the same kind of awe which Boswell describes himself to have experienced when he first met Johnson. Soon after the occasion of this dinner he removed to the Isle of Wight, where he kindly invited me to visit him. Those visits grew more and more frequent, until they were

[1] This short memoir was Jowett's last literary effort. Up to within a fortnight of his death he was working at it, and expressed the greatest anxiety to live long enough to make a faithful portrait of his friend.

[2] The present Archbishop of Canterbury.

repeated two or three times in each year, with scarcely an interruption, as long as he lived. I was in the habit of going both to Freshwater and to Aldworth: they were among the greatest pleasures of my life[1].

Having had the privilege of knowing Lord Tennyson intimately for so many years, it may be naturally supposed that I have something to communicate about him which is not known to the world in general. My own impression is, that anything which I or others may have to say of his daily life must, necessarily, be fragmentary and disappointing. A great man's character rarely, if ever, appears in the jests which he makes with his friends at table, or in the good stories which he narrates, although it is true also, as Dr Johnson says, that every man "may be judged of by his laughter." But his truest self must be estimated in his greatest efforts. The best and deepest nature of the poet will be found in the works of his genius, such as "In Memoriam," or, to take an instance of another kind in "The Northern Farmer," as our best conception of Shakespeare may be gathered, not from contemporary gossip about him, but from the *Sonnets*, from *Hamlet*, and the *Tempest*, and the life and death of Falstaff.

Those who read Tennyson attentively and consecutively know much more about him than can ever be learnt from passing observation. They will read him, as they read Shakespeare, with an ever-increasing wonder at the depth of his thought, and the fertility of his fancy.

If I were to describe his outward appearance, I should say that he was certainly unlike anyone else whom I ever saw. A glance at some of Watts' portraits of him will give, better than any description which can be expressed in words, a conception of his noble mien and look. He was a magnificent man, who stood before you in his native refinement and strength. The unconventionality of his manners was in keeping with the originality of his figure. He would sometimes say nothing, or a word or two only, to the stranger who approached him, out of shyness. He would sometimes come into the drawing-

[1] Since he became the possessor of Farringford, he found his quiet home and living with his wife and children the happiest place and life. Yet he was also extremely hospitable, often inviting not only his friends but the friends of his friends, and giving them a hearty welcome. For underneath a sensitive exterior he was thoroughly genial if he was understood. B. J.

room reading a book. At other times, especially to ladies, he was singularly gracious and benevolent. He would talk about the accidents of his own life with an extraordinary freedom, as at the moment they appeared to present themselves to his mind, the days of his boyhood that were passed at Somersby, and the old school of manners which he came across in his own neighbourhood: the days of the "apostles" at Cambridge: the years which he spent in London; the evenings enjoyed at the Cock Tavern, and elsewhere, when he saw another side of life, not without a kindly and humorous[1] sense of the ridiculous in his fellow-creatures. His repertory of stories was perfectly inexhaustible; they were often about slight matters that would scarcely bear repetition, but were told with such lifelike reality, that they convulsed his hearers with laughter. Like most story-tellers, he often repeated his favourites; but, like children, his audience liked hearing them again and again, and he enjoyed telling them. It might be said of him that he told more stories than anyone, but was by no means the regular story-teller. In the commonest conversation he showed himself a man of genius. His tales were full of dramatic life, owing to the great love and interest which he had for human things everywhere[2], far beyond the wonders either of Nature or of Art. The latter was connected with the poetical side of him, the former with the human realization of life.

Most of Tennyson's friends remember a small room high up at the top of the house [Farringford], formerly very bare except for books, afterwards made more comfortable, to which, when dinner was over, he retired, and, sometimes after half-an-hour's solitude, invited his friends to join him[3].

We either smoked with him, or, if we did not smoke, we had the privilege of hearing him talk, and of talking with him. This was his temple, or it might be termed his den, where his poems and a few favourite books were kept. It was a sign of more intimate friendship to be allowed to visit him there. At

[1] His humour was constant; and he never or hardly ever made puns or witticisms, but always lived in an attitude of humour. B. J.

[2] He was not a man of the world in the ordinary sense, but a man who had the greatest insight into the world, and often in a word or sentence flashed a light. B. J.

[3] However many easy chairs there might be in a room, he always chose the hardest with the most upright back.

such times, if he was not deterred by shyness, he said just what came into his head. But, in general he was very free and frank; he had nothing to conceal, and he felt so keenly, that if he had, he could not have concealed it. He used to utter strong thoughts in strong language, about recent discoveries in Science, about the politics of the day, about the deeper mysteries of human life. On a few topics he would discourse again and again with undiminished energy. There was, perhaps, no political matter in which he took so deep an interest as the defence of his country. He would often, in fancy, draw pictures, half-ludicrous, of the consequences of an invasion to himself, as an inhabitant of the Isle of Wight. In projects for the extension of suffrage he took no part; it was another kind of ideal, much more distant, on which his eye was fixed. Hence he combined a singular affection for the great statesman who has become the wonder of the English world, with a recoil from his policy. "I love Gladstone," he said, "but I hate his Home-rule policy." This was the sum of many political conversations; but he never studied to put together or to systematize his views. "Locksley Hall," although spoken in the character of a disappointed lover, contains the sum of his politics when he was a young man, and though he wrote an epilogue to the poem sixty years later, the point of view from which he regarded the world in this poem was never really altered, but only underwent the natural change of old age. The daily and weekly movements of politics, which, like the weather, are always changing, made little or no impression upon him; the weight of the unknown seemed to fall upon him more heavily.

In Natural Science he took a deep interest. In the first years of his childhood his great-grandfather had taught him some of the wonders of the starry heavens, in a manner which remained with him throughout life. Some paragraph in a newspaper or magazine about a comet, or fixed star, would often catch his eye; these he would invest with a light and life which he himself gave to them. He was greatly pleased at being informed that Mr Procter had said of him that there were no mistakes about the stars in his poems, and a similar compliment was paid to him by an eminent botanist about flowers. He probably never went out on a starlight night without "thoughts too deep for tears" arising within him. He had the keenest and most delicate sense of the beauties of Nature. From his

own windows he beheld, daily, one of the most perfect sea-views in England,—the line of coast stretching from the Downs at Freshwater along the whole south-east coast of the Isle of Wight. He rejoiced in the sun and sky and sea, and would often walk down to the sands at Freshwater, about half-a-mile distant from his house, to pay his respects to some unusual excitement of the ocean. He was a student, like Ruskin, of the ways of the clouds, as well as of the paths of the sea. They seemed to enter into his soul and to whisper new thoughts to him. Having been brought up in the country, and having lived there during the greater part of his life, he learned many things about plants and flowers which his capacious memory ever afterwards retained. It was not so much that his mind was always wandering from one scene to another, as that it seized upon things that he saw or imagined with an extraordinary power and intensity. He would have liked to have known more of astronomy and botany. It was one of his unfulfilled wishes, which he was continually repeating, to have seen the Tropics, but it is doubtful whether this greater variety and curiousness of knowledge would have made him a better poet.

He was very much of a scholar, but was not at all a pedant. Once he said to me, "I hate learning," by which I understood him to mean that he hated the minutiæ of criticism compiled by the Dryasdusts. They seemed to him to have no life in them, and to arrive at no result. More than thirty years ago I remember his making what appeared at the time a very striking remark, namely, that "the true origin of modern Biblical Criticism was to be ascribed not to Strauss, but to Niebuhr, who lived a generation earlier." He was what might be called a good scholar, in the University or Public School sense of the term; his father before him had been a scholar, and he inherited as well as acquired a good, accurate knowledge of Latin and Greek. Yet I seem to remember that he had his favourite Classics, such as Homer, and Pindar, and Theocritus. The books which were chiefly read at Eton more than half a century ago were best known to him, and not those which, since the days of Porson and Hermann, have chiefly occupied the attention of the youths of England. He was also a lover of Greek fragments. But I am not sure whether, in later life, he ever sat down to read consecutively the greatest works of Æschylus and Sophocles, although he used occasionally to dip into them. French, German,

and Italian he picked up by himself, not attaining any great proficiency in them, but sufficient to enable him to read them with ease. He had a profound respect for Goethe. It is worthy of remark, because it was a remark made by himself, that the description of Ulysses in the poem bearing that name is derived, not from Homer, but from Dante.

Several of his poems are the result of deep study. Like Milton, he had early been impressed by the Legend of King Arthur, and had intended to weave it into a new form. This was, perhaps, the earliest of his poetical dreams, but it was not one of them which was destined to be carried out. The great work which he had designed was in no respect like the so-called "Idylls" which have become so familiar to the public. His purpose was to have in some way or other represented in it the great religions of the world: but although it was definitely planned, this poem never saw the light. He offered to show me the rough sketch of it, but on enquiring some years afterwards about it, I found that it had already been destroyed. This change of purpose may be attributed to two reasons. First, because the time when he was meditating this poem was the time at which the greatest calamity befell him. One can hardly conceive the overwhelming impression made on a mind like Tennyson's by the loss of a friend who was more than all the world to him [A. H. Hallam]. Secondly, at this time, there also came upon him another great blow, the coldness and even malignity which attended his first efforts, when he had a very few admirers, and a host of enemies.

It is a proof of Tennyson's genius that he should have thus early grasped the great historical aspect of religion.

It may further be doubted whether the work could have been executed, or would have been understood, sixty years ago, at a time when men's minds were so little acquainted with Oriental speculations, and were so hide-bound in the controversies of Protestantism and Romanism.

To return to the "Den." Tennyson was constantly speaking of the thoughts which occupied his own mind, in which the following characteristics might be traced:—A strong desire to vindicate the ways of God to man, and, perhaps, to demonstrate a pertinacity on the part of man in demanding of God his rights. He was not a sceptic in the least degree, though deeply impressed by the wonder and mystery of the world which surrounded

him, especially its physical character. He was one of those who, though not an upholder of miracle-mongers, thought that the wonders of Heaven and Earth were never far absent from us. He had many stories to tell about Mesmerism, which had some effect upon his mind, though he can hardly be said to have seriously considered the subject. There is no trace of such stories anywhere in his writings. He was very impressible, and very willing to believe what he was told by anybody whom he *knew*. Yet it would be equally true to say that he was quite unaffected by the opinions of others. He had the susceptibility of a child, or of a woman; he had also (it was a strange combination) the strength of a giant, or of a God.

There was no one to whom he was so absolutely devoted, no poet of whom he had a more intimate knowledge, than Shakespeare. He said to me, and probably to many others, that there was one intellectual process in the world of which he could not even entertain an apprehension—that was, the Plays of Shakespeare. He thought that he could instinctively distinguish between the genuine and the spurious in them, e.g. between those parts of *King Henry VIII.* which are generally admitted to be spurious, and those that are genuine. The same thought was partly working in his mind on another occasion, when he spoke of two things, which he conceived to be beyond the intelligence of man, and it was certainly not repeated by him from any irreverence; the one, the intellectual genius of Shakespeare—the other the religious genius of Jesus Christ.

It was in the spirit of an old saint or mystic, and not of a modern rationalist, that Tennyson habitually thought and felt about the nature of Christ. Never did the slightest shadow of ridicule or profaneness mix itself up with the applications which he made of Scripture, although he was quite aware that there were many points on which he differed widely from the so-called Evangelical, or High-Church world, and he always strove to keep religion free from the taint of ridicule.

There were some other peculiarities about him, which have furnished endless material for gossip, and which have never yet been properly explained. Persons have often asked how such a king among men could have been so sensitive to the opinions of the public. It seems to them unmanly that he who was one of the greatest men of the century should have been unable to stand up against the prejudices of the vulgar. It was easier

to understand when looked at a little more closely. It was not really a desire of praise, or fear of blame which actuated him—he was above such feelings as these: but he was grieved at the injustice and meanness of mankind which was always seeking to depreciate the fair fame of another, which, the greater or nobler a man is, is always the more eager to decry him. He doubtless experienced a great deal of pain from the attacks of his enemies. I never remember his receiving the least pleasure from the commendations of his friends. The truth seemed to be that, as his fame became established in the world, he hardly thought much of what was said of him[1]. The feeling of pleasure, which was not wanting in him, was due to an appreciation of himself in his own breast. He felt that he saw more truly than others how far he had succeeded and how far he had failed in the attainment of his purpose; all else was really as nothing to him. He once asked me which I thought the most touching lines in any of his works. I ventured to reply, the lines in "Maud," beginning:

O that 'twere possible
After long grief and pain
To find the arms of my true love
Round me once again!

He gave some sign of assent to the answer, adding, by the way, that they were not originally meant for that place. I have no doubt that innumerable verses of his, which gave so much pleasure to the rest of the world, have also given the truest and most natural pleasure to himself.

If it were possible, with propriety, I should like to say something about the wife who survives him, though I am aware that such a subject is beyond the proper limits of the biography. I can only speak of her as one of the most beautiful, the purest, the most innocent, the most disinterested persons whom I have ever known. He once told me, as indeed he told some things to everybody, which others keep to themselves, how she said to him, "When I pray I see the face of God smiling upon me." Such is the spirit of this remarkable life. As there is no chance of her giving me leave to repeat these words, and as I was not forbidden to do so by him, I venture to snatch them from the numberless sacred words which passed between them. It is no

[1] He never allowed himself to be puffed in the newspapers if he could possibly prevent it. B. J.

wonder that people speak of her with bated breath, as a person whom no one would ever think of criticising, whom everyone would recognize, in goodness and saintliness, as the most unlike anyone whom they have ever met. Though not claiming to possess intellectual powers, which she assuredly has, she was probably her husband's best critic, and certainly the one whose authority he would most willingly have recognized. Yet, with all her saintliness, she is not at all puritanical in her views, either in regard to him, or to anyone else. She has considerable sense of humour, and is remarkably considerate about her guests. The greatest influence of his life would have to be passed over in silence if I were to omit her name. These few lines I have ventured to insert without the permission of you, Hallam, lest by some inadvertence matters so important should pass out of remembrance.

She thinks a good deal about the conditions of society. She says that she is glad to have protracted life by a few years because she has come to see how small, comparatively, are the differences of good people, and how great the agreements. During the last thirty years and more, she has preserved not only life, but almost youth, on her sofa. She said to me, "About a future life we know hardly anything, but that little is enough." She is a lover of the good old times, and especially of the poor, though I must admit that she seems to me to wish to combine the happy condition of all classes, more than Political Economy can truly allow. And though she knows that "The old order changeth, yielding place to new," and that the liberties of England were not carried without many struggles, she thinks that the life of Christ and of St John may have a place in the world such as she has known in her youth. Yet she never for a moment desires that the world, or that mankind, should take a step backward in their course. By a happy inconsistency she thinks only of the good, and seems to have forgotten all the evils of the past. To her, whatever is best in the past is the only type of good in the future which has been allowed to survive. A lady, well known in the world, who was a friend of Emily and Alfred Tennyson, Mrs Cameron, and through them, of myself, used to say to me, that, though unknown, "she was as great as he was."

Should this remark of Mrs Cameron's ever fall into Lady Tennyson's hands, she will only wonder that anyone should

seriously have thought that her husband shared his greatness with her, yet one who knew them both intimately is conscious that the poet himself was aware that these words were truly spoken.

Jowett had not quite finished this paper, and a few days before his death wrote to me as follows:

I had several more things to say about your father, but I think I had better stop here, because I have a distinct recollection of these being his utterances, but of other things I cannot be so sure, nor of the sense in which he meant them. I have been myself caught rather more suddenly than I expected. I cannot express the depth of gratitude which I owe to your father and mother. Would that I could have done more justice to their memories.

Yours affectionately, B. JOWETT.

1893.

## LETTER FROM J. A. FROUDE.

1894.

I owe to your father the first serious reflexions upon life and the nature of it which have followed me for more than fifty years. The same voice speaks to me now as I come near my own end, from beyond the bar. Of the early poems "Love and Death" had the deepest effect upon me. The same thought is in the last lines of the last poems which we shall ever have from him.

Your father in my estimate stands and will stand far away by the side of Shakespeare above all other English Poets, with this relative superiority even to Shakespeare, that he speaks the thoughts and speaks *to* the perplexities and misgivings of his own age.

He was born at the fit time before the world had grown inflated with the vanity of Progress, and there was still an atmosphere in which such a soul could grow. There will be no such others for many a long age.

Yours gratefully, J. A. FROUDE.

# A GLIMPSE OF FARRINGFORD, 1858; AND "THE ANCIENT SAGE," 1885[1].

MY DEAR HALLAM,

Rude and repeated assaults upon my health during the last two years have left me but little strength for the task you would impose upon me. Last summer was spent among the Alps, in the hope that the mere presence of scenes of former vigour and delight would do something towards restoring the forces I had lost. For eleven weeks we clung to our lofty solitude. Southwards and westwards the mountains rose in glory, while to the east and north stretched the noble glacier which for five-and-thirty years on and off had been my playground. I was never able to approach it. On the 3rd of October we set out for home. I could not ride downwards, while transport by chair was abhorrent to me; I therefore descended on foot, with a strong arm near me ready to help in case of need. My guide was a pious Catholic. Prompted by some local circumstance, he halted at a certain point and said: "*Herr Professor, Sie wollen es nicht übel nehmen?*" (You will not take it amiss?) He then described to me some wonderful cures that had been wrought at a neighbouring shrine, and most earnestly recommended the celebration of a solemn mass at that shrine for my recovery. "It can do no harm," he urged; to which I cordially agreed. "But," I added, "the cures are always performed on believers, and I unfortunately am not a believer." This was admitted to be a difficulty, so we jogged amicably downwards.

From Brieg, with a loving companion beside me, I crept down the valley of the Rhone—halting two nights at Sierre, two at Vernayaz, and two at Lausanne. Here the news of your father's death reached us—Louisa first, me afterwards; for I was low at the time and she delayed the communication of intelligence which she knew must sink me lower still. On Monday the 10th, Miss Marryat, daughter of the celebrated novelist, secured for me a copy of the *Times*, wherein I read the brief and touching account by Dr Dabbs of the passing away of Tennyson.

Your father's interest in science was profound, but not, I believe, unmingled with fear of its "materialistic" tendencies. This, however,

[1] A Fragment, by John Tyndall, written in the autumn of 1892.

is to me a point of secondary importance. His influence on the life of a scientific man touches me more closely. You were not born when that influence in my case began. Fifty years ago, in the sixth chapter of Carlyle's *Past and Present* I found the line:

"There dwells the great Achilles whom we knew";

to which was attached a footnote referring the line to Tennyson. At the time here referred to, Thomas Carlyle was the inspirer and strengthener of the noblest minds known to me. This footnote assured me that Tennyson was a poet whose acquaintance must be made without delay. Not very long afterwards, two young men might have been seen eagerly engaged upon a volume, in the corner of a modest hotel in St Martin's Court, Covent Garden. The one read, the other listened. The one, after a life of usefulness and honour, was snatched from us last year by influenza, and now lies in Highgate Cemetery, the other remains to record the fact. The book in which my friend Hirst and I were then absorbed was entitled "Poems by Alfred Tennyson."

I do not know whether scientific men generally have found the warming up of the imagination as beneficial to them as it has been to me. Be that as it may, writings apparently far apart from science have often spurred me on in the pursuit of science. In 1849 I had gone to the University of Marburg in Hesse-Cassel; and the antithesis of my intellectual disciplines at that time is revealed by a brief remark in my journal on October 19th, 1850: "I must now turn from Tennyson, to whom I had appealed for inspiration, to Lefebre de Fourcy," a dry mathematician. I may anticipate matters here by quoting an entry of later date. I had declined a position in London which I might well have been proud to occupy, and in reference to this subject, I write: "Many of my friends will deem me unpractical for refusing such an offer. Bence Jones, indeed, has already discovered from my letters that I am 'poetical.' Be it so. If poetry make me a dreamer, so much the worse for me. If it make me a worker, so much the better."

Under the date of Sunday, 20th October, 1850, I find the following entry: "Up at 6 A.M. and began the day by reading Tennyson. I am acquainted with no spirit so strong, pure, and beautiful. Every line sparkles with empyreal fire, so that it is difficult to make a selection. I will, however, notice 'The Two Voices,' simply because Tom [Hirst] has not placed upon it his prize mark. In this poem the tempter to despair is furnished with his best weapons, and foiled though armed *cap-à-pie*." Your father's dear friend and mine, the late excellent James Spedding, first drew my attention to the definition

of poetry as "a fine excess," and certainly the effect of your father's inspired language upon the two young men above referred to could not be better expressed. It was wine to our intellects, and many a night between ten and eleven, during the winter of 1850–51, after the scientific labours of the day were over, we quaffed together of this noble vintage.

In 1853, after a health-excursion to the Blocksberg, with *Faust* in my pocket and the scenes of the Walpurgis-nacht around me, I joined the Royal Institution. In his sweet wisdom, Faraday, perhaps on the whole the tenderest and most beautiful spirit that I have known, looked after my welfare. One of his earliest monitions to me was: "Tyndall, take care of your health." It occasionally broke down under stress of work, and I took strong measures to restore it. Cumberland, Westmorland and Wales were respectively laid under contribution. But the sanative influence brought to bear upon me was of a dual nature, and I am not sure whether in those excursions your father's verses had not as much to do as the mountain air with the restitution of my vigour. It was my habit as I walked to refresh myself by reciting passages aloud, sometimes from one poem, sometimes from another, most frequently perhaps from "Œnone." On one occasion I remember straining up Styehead Pass in Cumberland, with a horse-cloth thrown over me as a defence against the torrential rain, while the lines on *Will* at the end of "Maud," beginning:

O well for him whose Will is strong!

rang out cheerily among the crags.

But the place most frequently visited, because it was nearest to me, was the Isle of Wight. For many years my favourite expedition was a foot journey round the southern coast to the Needles; returning along the central spine of the island to Carisbrooke and Newport; thence to Cowes, and back by way of Southampton to London. Early in the month of April 1858, accompanied by the eldest son of Dr Bence Jones, I was upon the island. I took the usual coast line to Freshwater Gate, and put up at Plumbley's Hotel. Letters had been addressed to me to the post-office, Freshwater, and these, I know not why, had been forwarded to Farringford. The letters were afterwards sent to the hotel, accompanied by a note from Mrs Tennyson, inviting me to dinner. Her inherent courtesy expressed itself in the words: "Will you pardon Mr Tennyson that he is not himself the bearer of this?" I had often wished to meet the poet, but had never made a move towards securing this pleasure. "It is wonderful," I remark in my journal, "how things gravitate in this world. Here is a great pleasure and a great privilege come to me without my seeking." On

Tuesday, 5th April, I first called on Mrs Tennyson. After a time the poet himself appeared—a fine, strong, frank-looking man, with large forehead and dark beard. The sound of his voice was straightforward and brotherly. It seemed the vehicle of perfect candour of thought. He always spoke without fear or concealment, as if animated by a grand and formidable innocence. The visit here referred to was a "morning call." We were engaged to dine, and were informed that we should meet Mr Jowett at dinner. After talking for half an hour, about Frederick Maurice, about the adjacent Down, the daffodils upon the lawn and the resemblance of their colour to the hues of sunset, I came away. At the hour appointed we went to Farringford, and found Mr Jowett already there. This was my first meeting with the learned and hospitable Master of Balliol. He was ruddy and of a fair countenance, and yet his hair was gray. Two fine little boys—probably in Tennyson's estimation his best poems—joined us at dinner. They came trustfully and lovingly forward and kissed me. They had inherited, or had been taught, their father's straightforwardness. We spoke of the Tyrol, which Mrs Tennyson would like to visit; of North Wales, of Switzerland and my climb up Mont Blanc. I also referred to my ascent of Styehead Pass with the poem on *Will* upon my tongue. But, wishing to be true to the science of the subject, I added that we must fall back in the long run on muscular force. This was a lowering of motive power from the moral to the physical; and, deeming probably that I had laid too much stress on the material side of the question, Mrs Tennyson turned towards me with that ethereal expression which Watts has seized so faithfully in his splendid portrait, and remarked quietly, "You can at all events walk till you die." Taken in conjunction with her obviously frail physique, I thought the remark an impressive example of spiritual force and resolution.

After talking for some time about the influence and limits of the will, Tennyson turned to me and said, "I am glad that you are not one of those who disdain to quote 'Maud.'" We discussed the poem for some time, and he laid some stress upon the manner in which it ought to be read. We passed on to speak of the moon, of the change in its apparent size as it approached the horizon, then to the colours of the clouds, the hue of the firmament, and my work among the mountains of Switzerland. Later on we joined Mrs Tennyson, for a moment, and then I accompanied the poet to his sanctum upstairs. There was a table on which lay a large scientific volume, a sofa, some chairs, and a rack over the chimney-piece in which were stuck fifteen or twenty pipes. The drawers of the table were crammed with tobacco of various kinds. He warned me not to smoke if I was not accustomed to it. I was, however, sufficiently educated to bear

a pull. He filled a pipe for me, lit it himself, and transferred it to my lips. We puffed sociably side by side and continued to speak about "Maud." Surely the critics ought to be careful of the power which they wield. "Maud" had been savagely reviewed by the London press; but no journal would venture to speak of it now save in terms of admiration. Tennyson affirmed that the oftener he read the poem the more he was convinced of its merits. It was, he considered, one of the best things he had ever done. The criticisms of the press irritated him. At Farringford, he pointed out, he was withdrawn from the world, and on taking up a paper and finding himself misconstrued and abused he suffered keen annoyance. "A flea will annoy me. Just feel my skin," he added, baring his wrist; "a flea-bite will spread a square inch over its surface. The term thin-skinned is perfectly expressive. I *am* thin-skinned, and I take no pains to hide it. I know it would be considered more dignified if I encased myself in a crust like Goethe; but that is not my nature. People imagine that I have described myself in 'Maud,' that it is the flower of my own life, and they ask, 'Is this all he has to give us?' Nothing could be more absurd. It is the vice of the age that a man cannot say anything without its being supposed to be personal." The writer of an article in the *Westminster Review* had affirmed that all kindness had deserted the poet. Among other things he was denounced for his supposed attack upon John Bright. Tennyson declared that he had no thought of John Bright when he spoke of the "broad-brimm'd hawker of holy things." He had no knowledge at the time that John Bright was a Quaker. The result of the reviewing, however, was that while 10,000 copies of the first edition of "Maud" had been sold, only 390 of the second edition had been disposed of.

We were joined by Mr Jowett. Some time previously Buckle had lectured at the Royal Institution, and we spoke of his lecture and of scientific methods generally. While conceding its due place to "deduction," and admitting the power of imagination as an instrument of scientific discovery, both Jowett and Tennyson thought Buckle's lecture an empty performance. The "Master" having bidden us "Good-night," we continued our conversation. It presently became intensely interesting. With great earnestness Tennyson described to me a state of consciousness into which he could throw himself by thinking intently of his own name. It was impossible to give anything that could be called a description of the state, for language seemed incompetent to touch it. It was an apparent isolation of the spirit from the body. Wishing doubtless to impress upon me the reality of the phenomenon, he exclaimed, "By God Almighty, there is no delusion in the matter! It is no nebulous ecstasy, but a state of transcendent wonder, associated

with absolute clearness of mind." Other persons with powerful imaginations have had, I believe, similar experiences. Walking out with a friend one evening, the poet Wordsworth approached a gate, and laying hold of its bars, turned to his companion and said, "My dear sir, to assure myself of the existence of my own body, I am sometimes obliged to grasp an object like this and shake it." It was at the Bel Alp, and I believe by the late Professor Bonamy Price, that this incident was communicated to me. The condition here referred to appears to be similar to that "union with God" which was described by Plotinus and Porphyry. From this subject we passed on to the present condition of religion in this country. Tennyson looked with confidence to the development of Christianity, but the religion of our sects was not Christianity. The *Record* and the *Univers* though apparently hostile, were quite alike. He held undoubtingly the doctrine of a personal immortality, and was by no means content to accept our present existence as a mere preparation for the life of more perfect beings. He had once asked John Sterling whether he would be content with such an arrangement, and Sterling had replied that he would. "I would *not*," added Tennyson emphatically; "I should consider that a liberty had been taken with me if I were made simply a means of ushering in something higher than myself." Thus we conversed, with perfect frankness and cordiality—he with his foot against the bar of the grate, and I with my shoulder against a shelf at my right. Descending from our attic and having bid Mrs Tennyson "Good-night," I was led through a series of rooms hung with pictures to a back-door which enabled me to take the shortest route to my hotel. Our parting was exceedingly cordial. He wished me to come again—to tea, to dinner, at all events to come. In fact we separated as if we had known each other for years.

The weather was stormy during this visit to the island, and the sea at times was very wild. By day and night I occasionally sat near the shore observing the advance of the waves and listening to their thunder. The pebbles and shingles on the beach are mainly of flint, and emit a sharp sound on collision with each other. As the billows break and roll up the beach, they carry the shingle along with them, and on their retreat they drag it downwards. Here the collisions of the flint pebbles are innumerable. They blend together in a continuous sound which could not be better described than by the line in "Maud":

> Now to the scream of a madden'd beach dragg'd down by the wave[1].

[1] Actually written about the beach at Freshwater.

I thought the line when I first read it intensely pictorial. It was denounced as extravagant. In this respect, however, as in others, the reviewers, or their wiser successors, have attained to a sounder judgment.

On the 7th I was again with the poet in his little room at the top of the house. The noble Atlas of Keith Johnston lay upon his table. In regard to metaphors drawn from science, your father, like Carlyle, made sure of their truth. To secure accuracy, he spared no pains. I found in his room charts of isothermals and isobars intended to ensure the exactitude of certain allusions of his to physical science. In illustration of this, the late Lord Houghton, while still Mr Monckton Milnes, once told me that, having composed an exquisite poem upon a flower, Tennyson discarded it because of some botanical flaw. In comparing him with Carlyle, I notice that the latter drew his imagery, for the most part, from what we call inorganic nature. Physics and chemistry were well advanced when Carlyle wrote, but modern researches in biology had scarcely begun. These latter fell into your father's hands, and he has made noble use of them from "In Memoriam" onwards. I asked him on this occasion for some explanation of a passage in "The Vision of Sin":

God made Himself an awful rose of dawn.

He replied that the power of explaining such concentrated expressions of the imagination was very different from that of writing them. "What I say," he added, "will be considered nonsense by some, but you will not so consider it." We talked of Campbell and Wordsworth. He admired the bold swing of "The Battle of the Baltic," though it had some very faulty lines. He took me up rather quickly when I referred to the verse beginning:

"But the might of England flushed
To anticipate the scene";

remarking that it was the most faulty line in the piece. I did not however intend to detach the line from its context. I meant to refer to the whole passage.

"'Hearts of oak!' our captains cried; when each gun
From its adamantine lips
Spread a death-shade round the ships,
Like the hurricane eclipse
Of the sun."

These lines Tennyson considered very fine.

It may be worth while to mention here how I first made the acquaintance of "Maud." Rachel had come to the Haymarket Theatre for a few representations, and I, anxious to see and hear the great actress, engaged a stall. I had picked up "Maud" at a bookseller's in Piccadilly as I went to the theatre. I had never seen your father then, but his previous work justified my anticipations of delight. I had read several pages before the play began. I read between the acts, lowering the book to catch sufficient light from the stage. Once I went out, and walked to and fro between St James's Square and the theatre, still reading. Before I reached my lodgings I had finished the poem. I thought it true, strong and beautiful; and soon afterwards, meeting Mr Monckton Milnes in Glasgow, I expressed to him my opinion. He emphatically agreed with me. "It is beautiful," he exclaimed, "and the reviewers are blundering." Lord Houghton, I may say, was a loyal soul, and he was to the backbone an Englishman, proud of the historic greatness of his country. His mode of life was one that I should not desire to imitate, but his friendship was steadfast; and to none perhaps more steadfast than to your father and Carlyle.

In the year 1885, that is to say twenty-eight years after the time here referred to, were published *Tiresias, and other Poems*, by Alfred Lord Tennyson. For a copy of this remarkable volume I am indebted to its author. It contains a poem called "The Ancient Sage[1]." The Sage, who existed "a thousand summers ere the time of Christ," is described as having quitted his ancient city, followed by one who loved and honoured him, but who nevertheless was not his disciple. The younger man was "richly garb'd, but worn from wasteful living." He bore in his hand a scroll of verse. At the mouth of a cavern from which "an affluent fountain pour'd," the old man halted, turned and spoke:

> What hast thou there? Some deathsong for the Ghouls
> To make their banquet relish? let me read.

The allusions to "wasteful living" and "some deathsong for the Ghouls" indicate clearly the light in which Tennyson viewed the younger man. His moral and religious fibre are gone, and in particular he has lost all belief in a life after death. He is, briefly, what we should call a materialist, and the object of the nineteenth-century poet is to combat, through the mouth of the Sage, the errors of this view.

[1] "The Ancient Sage" is not the philosophy of the Chinese philosopher Laot-ze, but it was written after reading his life and maxims. A. T.'s MS note.

I would here remark, once for all, that the passages read from the young man's scroll, so far from being the language of a libertine—so far from being a "deathsong for the Ghouls"—are of a quality which no libertine or associate of Ghouls could possibly have produced. Supreme beauty and delicacy of language are not consistent with foul companionship, and never, even in Tennyson's own pages, has language assumed a form more surpassingly beautiful, more instinct with celestial melody, than in these passages quoted by the Ancient Sage.

How far thro' all the bloom and brake
That nightingale is heard!
What power but the bird's could make
This music in the bird?
How summer-bright are yonder skies,
And earth as fair in hue!
And yet what sign of aught that lies
Behind the green and blue?

This is exquisite. But to my mind the gem of the "Scroll" is to be found further on. The younger man had loved, and he had lost his love. My judgment may seem extravagant, but I do not think the English language has ever before been wrought into music equal to that of the lover's threnody.

The years that when my Youth began
Had set the lily and rose
By all my ways where'er they ran,
Have ended mortal foes;
My rose of love for ever gone,
My lily of truth and trust—
They made her lily and rose in one,
And changed her into dust.

O rosetree planted in my grief,
And growing, on her tomb,
Her dust is greening in your leaf,
Her blood is in your bloom.
O slender lily waving there,
And laughing back the light,
In vain you tell me "Earth is fair"
When all is dark as night.

My special purpose in introducing this poem, however, was to call your attention to a passage further on which greatly interested me.

The poem is, throughout, a discussion between a believer in immortality and one who is unable to believe. The method pursued is this. The Sage reads a portion of the scroll, which he has taken from the hands of his follower, and then brings his own arguments to bear upon that portion, with a view to neutralising the scepticism of the younger man. Let me here remark that I had read the whole series of poems published under the title "Tiresias," full of admiration for their freshness and vigour. Seven years after I had first read them your father died, and you, his son, asked me to contribute a chapter to the book which you contemplate publishing. I knew that I had some small store of references to my interview with your father carefully written in ancient journals. On the receipt of your request, I looked up the account of my first visit to Farringford, and there, to my profound astonishment, I found described that experience of your father's which, in the mouth of the Ancient Sage, was made the ground of an important argument against materialism and in favour of personal immortality eight-and-twenty years afterwards. In no other poem during all these years is, to my knowledge, this experience once alluded to. I had completely forgotten it, but here it was recorded in black and white. If you turn to your father's account of the wonderful state of consciousness superinduced by thinking of his own name, and compare it with the argument of the Ancient Sage, you will see that they refer to one and the same phenomenon.

> And more, my son! for more than once when I
> Sat all alone, revolving in myself
> The word that is the symbol of myself,
> The mortal limit of the Self was loosed,
> And past into the Nameless, as a cloud
> Melts into Heaven. I touch'd my limbs, the limbs
> Were strange, not mine—and yet no shade of doubt,
> But utter clearness, and thro' loss of Self
> The gain of such large life as match'd with ours
> Were Sun to spark—unshadowable in words,
> Themselves but shadows of a shadow-world.
>
> * * * * * *

[Left unfinished and uncorrected Dec. 1893.]

# IMPRESSIONS, BY T. WATTS-DUNTON.

1883–1892.

All are agreed that D. G. Rossetti's was a peculiarly winning personality, but no one has been in the least able to say why. Nothing is easier, however, than to find the charm of Tennyson. It lay in a great veracity of soul: it lay in a simple single-mindedness, so child-like that, unless you had known him to have been the undoubted author of poems as marvellous for exquisite art as for inspiration, you could not have supposed but that all subtleties—even those of poetic art—must be foreign to a nature so simple.

Working in a language like ours—a language which has to be moulded into harmony by a myriad subtleties of art—how can this great, inspired, simple nature be the delicate-fingered artist of "The Princess," "The Palace of Art," "The Day-Dream," and "The Dream of Fair Women"?

Tennyson knew of but one justification for the thing he said, viz., that it was the thing he thought. Behind his uncompromising directness was apparent a noble and a splendid courtesy of the grand old type. As he stood at the porch at Aldworth meeting a guest or bidding him good-bye—as he stood there, tall far beyond the height of average men, his skin showing dark and tanned by the sun and wind—as he stood there no one could mistake him for anything but a great forthright English gentleman. Always a man of an extraordinary beauty of presence, he showed up to the last the beauty of old age to a degree rarely seen. He was the most hospitable of men. It was very rare indeed for him to part from a guest without urging him to return, and generally with the words, "Come whenever you like."

Tennyson's knowledge of nature—nature in every aspect—was simply astonishing. His passion for "star-gazing" has often been commented upon by readers of his poetry. Since Dante no poet in any land has so loved the stars. He had an equal delight in

watching the lightning; and I remember being at Aldworth once during a thunder-storm when I was alarmed at the temerity with which he persisted, in spite of all remonstrances, in gazing at the blinding lightning. For moonlight effects he had a passion equally strong, and it is especially pathetic to those who know this to remember that he passed away in the light he so much loved—in a room where there was no artificial light—nothing to quicken the darkness but the light of the full moon, which somehow seems to shine more brightly at Aldworth than anywhere else in England.

In a country having a composite language such as ours it may be affirmed with special emphasis that there are two kinds of poetry: one appealing to the uncultivated masses, the other appealing to the few who are sensitive to the felicitous expression of deep thought and to the true beauties of poetic art.

Of all poets Shakespeare is the most popular, and yet in his use of what Dante calls the "sieve for noble words" his skill transcends that of even Milton, Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats. His felicities of thought and of diction in the great passages seem little short of miraculous and there are so many that it is easy to understand why he is so often spoken of as being a kind of inspired improvisatore. That he was *not* an improvisatore, however, anyone can see who will take the trouble to compare the first edition of *Romeo and Juliet* with the received text, the first sketch of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* with the play as we now have it, and the *Hamlet* of 1603 with the *Hamlet* of 1604, and with the still further varied version of the play given by Heminge and Condell in the Folio of 1623. Next to Shakespeare in this great power of combining the forces of the two great classes of English poets, appealing both to the commonplace public and to the artistic sense of the few, stands, perhaps, Chaucer; but since Shakespeare's time no one has met with anything like Tennyson's success in effecting a reconciliation between popular and artistic sympathy with poetry in England.

## LETTER FROM FREDERIC W. H. MYERS.

You have asked me, knowing well what pleasure the request would give me, to send you a few words, not of formal criticism, but of expression of intimate feeling as to your father's work;—your father, a greater man than whom I have never looked and shall never look upon. You tell me to approach the subject, "not from the side of Plotinus, but from the side of Virgil." I understand what you mean. On your father's prophetic message, as I must deem it, I have already said my say; and the other point at which my sympathy was deepest was in our common veneration for Virgil.

Such veneration is no chance preference or literary idiosyncrasy. Rather it implies the instructed, the comprehending acceptance of a certain ideal of the poetic art. It would be absurd, indeed, to draw up poets in two opposite camps; especially absurd in treating of a poet whom those who best appreciated Romanticism held as romantic, while those who best appreciated Classicism felt him as classic to the core. Yet the words thus used express a real distinction; and it is well to draw out their meaning and to realise how we regard their leading exemplars. In each art, then, we tend to call the type *romantic* when the artist strives above all things to make his work fresh, vivid, interesting; infusing into it individual emotion, interweaving with it the attractiveness of other forms of art; filling it, as one may say, with the pulse and breath of life. The aim of him whom we call the classical artist is at first sight a narrower one. For his absorbing and primary desire is to carry to its utmost height that innate and inexplicable charm in the relations of sound or line or rhythm or colour which makes the essential principle of his art. When he fails, he degenerates into a *virtuoso*. When he succeeds, he enters in some sort into the hidden heritage of emotion which maintains the life of Art itself; and although his public may sometimes be small, he gives to *cognoscenti* a joy at least as penetrating and vital as any which the romanticist can bestow. Each type, I say, has its dangers, but there is need of both; not only of Wagner, but of Beethoven; not only of Shakespeare, but of Virgil.

Yet into such estimations there enters a practical question, which in judging of poetry is too often ignored. In order to appreciate the severer type of any art, long training is required. In music or painting no one questions the need of special and technical preparation, not only before a man can create, but before he can fully understand. In poetry, on the other hand, there seems to most men to be nothing to

learn. The mere mechanism of verse, the scheme of English prosody, comes by nature, or may be mastered in an hour. This done, the boy thinks that he may read as he likes, and make his study of poetry a holiday thing. But it is not so; there is that to learn which takes years in the learning. For myself, I am no fanatical advocate of a classical education,—a form of training which must needs lose its old unique position now that there is so much else to know. But for one small class of students such an education still seems to me essential; for those, namely, who desire to judge the highest poetry aright. Must it not needs be so? In all else we may be wiser than the ancients, but Evolution has not again produced a language or a race like the Greek. The *Exemplaria Græca* should still, as in the days of Horace, be the study of night and morn; and with the Greek, too, we must rank that small group of poets on whose lips the language of Rome also was worthy of the mistress of the world.

Yet with modern studies, in this crowded age, the modern man of letters is often content. And classical education itself has felt the influence of science, and tends to make history and philology, rather than poetry, its leading aims. But surely not philology nor history, but such a vital sense of the spirit of classical poetry as your father possessed, *that* is the true treasure of antiquity and the flower of the Past. For indeed the highest use of language, the highest use, one may say, of history itself, has been to bestow upon mankind a few thousand lines of poetry for which all other study of bygone ages is but practice and preparation, and which should become by endless broodings no mere acquisition from without, but the inmost structure and prepotent energy of the onward-striving soul.

> Praise Him who gave no gifts from oversea,
> But gave thyself to thee.

And this the long line of poets themselves have been the first to feel. They have recognised the true tradition, and lived again the ancient song.

> Quam pæne furvæ regna Proserpinæ
> Et judicantem vidimus Æacum
> Sedesque discretas piorum, et
> Æoliis fidibus querentem—

Those complaints, indeed, might seem ill to befit the ears of the pious, in their discrete abodes. Yet nothing draws us closer to Horace than this; his instinct in the face of death itself, that from Sappho's lips "things worthy of a sacred silence" must sound across the underworld.

What Horace here has done for Sappho, that Dante in his noblest passages, your father in his most perfect poem, have done for the *altissimo poeta*. The one has expressed the veneration of the modern, as the other of the mediæval world. And surely that ode "To Virgil," read with due lightening of certain trochaic accents in the latter half of each line, touches the high-water mark of English song. Apart from the specific allusions, almost every phrase recalls and rivals some intimate magic, some incommunicable fire: "Landscape-lover, lord of language"; *Tum sciat aerias Alpes et Norica si quis;* "All the charm of all the Muses"; *Aonas in montis ut duxerit una sororum.*

But most Virgilian of all are the two central lines:

Light among the vanish'd ages; star that gildest yet this phantom shore;
Golden branch amid the shadows, kings and realms that pass to rise no more.

Ay, this it is which lives for us out of the confused and perishing Past! The gross world's illusion and the backward twilight are lit by that sacred ray.

And how noble a comparison is that of the elect poet himself to his one golden bough in Avernus' forest, which gleamed amid the sea of green!

Talis erat species auri frondentis opaca
Ilice; sic leni crepitabat bractea vento.

We are here among things that shall endure. It may be that our English primacy in poetry, now some four centuries old, is drawing to its close. It may be that the art must pass ere long to younger races, with fresher idioms and a new outlook on this ancient world. But whatever else shall pass from us, Tennyson shall remain. *His* rhythm also shall "sound for ever of imperial" England; shall be the voice and symbol of this age of mighty workings, this world-ingathering race.

We sail'd wherever ship could sail;
We founded many a mighty state;
Pray God our greatness may not fail
Thro' craven fears of being great!

How august, how limitless a thing is his own spirit's upward flight! In "The Voyage" he has given us the impulse of glorious youth; and in "Vastness" the old man's outlook, as of "one who feels the immeasurable world"; and in "Crossing the Bar" he has borne the soul onward, on "such a tide as moving seems asleep," into the infinity which men call death.

What honour for him, what progress still, in that unknown which we shall some day know!

*Dicite, felices animæ, tuque optume vates;—*

round him, as round Musæus of old, the souls shall press and cling; of him too shall we ask the heart-stirring question, and receive the wise reply; "things worthy of a sacred silence" he too shall utter among the dead.

## PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS BY F. T. PALGRAVE (INCLUDING SOME CRITICISMS BY TENNYSON).

1849–1892.

Despite the long privilege of Lord Tennyson's society with which I have been favoured, few and poor, I fear, will these recollections be found. My knowledge of him began with the youthful reverence due to one who, exception made of Wordsworth, then almost in his eightieth year and equally revered by both, was already accepted as the first poet wherever the "Yes" *si suona:* and this feeling towards the poet presently became that deeper, higher, and sweeter reverence for the man, which could only widen with the years. It was indeed on the very first day I visited him (April 2nd, 1849) that I see he gave me (first also of how many gifts!) the lines "You might have won...," just printed in a newspaper. Hence, impressed from the very beginning by the heart-felt praise which Tennyson here gave to "unrecording friends," I held myself absolutely barred by the fealty of friendship, from the attempt to make any memorial of his words. Deeply and often indeed did I long for such record, thinking with pain, after hours often carried past midnight in long dialogue, how much that one would not willingly let die, what golden streams had flowed by to waste and Lethe. But "The poet's work is his life, and no one has a right to ask for more," he would always say: reaching once even the barbarity, as I could not help calling it, that if Horace had left an autobiography, and the single MS were in his hands, he would throw it into the fire. And, consistently, he would never read such Lives.

Sometimes the thought also came, as the sense gradually grew, that against his recorded desire, he too must abide the natural fate, the penalty, in his eyes, of a "Life and Letters,"—might not then some note be silently made, to be used when his, too, must be reckoned among the "Silent Voices"? Yet that, again, seemed a default in true and absolute loyalty; and, over-scrupulous as this "self-denying

ordinance" may appear to some judges worthy of respect, I can scarcely regret that I observed it.

On March 31st, 1849, through the kindness of Henry Hallam, youngest son to the great historian, and worthy himself to be Arthur's brother in beauty of character and pure nobleness of life, I was asked to meet Tennyson at the house of Hallam's cousin by marriage, W. H. Brookfield, in Portman Street. Tennyson's affectionate friendship has been one of the mainstays of my life; and this was the unconscious beginning of it.

At that time the two green volumes of 1842, with "The Princess" in its first form (1847), had been to me, as to thousands more, Gateways into a new Paradise. Hence, a pride in the thought of looking upon this great enchanter; a vague expectation; a planless pleasure. But I was here in the circle of his own friends, Thackeray amongst others; and except recognition of the features and abundant hair (familiar through the little print from S. Laurence's fine monochromatic portrait), and of a few words upon our common friendship with the Hallam family, I have preserved no memory of Tennyson during this evening. But at the close, discovering that our routes homeward began in the same direction, his to a house in the Camden Town Road, mine to Hampstead, we set forth together. As I always found it afterwards, his conversation (about "The Princess" *inter alia*) was on that evening frank, full, varied, yet never trivial: ending finally (if I may be excused for repeating words which vanity, maybe, fixed in my memory) with, "I like what I see of you: you do not seem to have the distant air (or, airs of superiority) which Oxford men show," and parting with an invitation to visit him in his lodgings. I had then just left that University, and tried to repudiate the charge; a certain foundation for which, however, I have since recognized[1]. "He was very open and friendly," I wrote that evening: he had "the look of one who had suffered greatly: strength and sensitiveness blended."

Two days after, with a mixed sense of fear and delight (almost as if about to make a proposal), I accordingly climbed to the upper floor of the lodgings, one of a few houses fronting the Hampstead Road, just south of Mornington Crescent, and found Tennyson in a somewhat dingy room, sitting close over the fire, with many short black pipes in front, and a stout jar of tobacco by his side. Reverting to the Hallams,

[1] Bishop Charles Wordsworth when at Christ Church, some eighteen years earlier, similarly criticizes the common "donnishness" of Oxford society, compared with the tone of Cambridge. Tennyson made a line on the Oxford "masher's" general reception of a stranger:

With one Oxonian stare from heel to head.

although I had to confess ignorance of the elder son, beyond what was conveyed in the very rare privately printed memoir by his high-souled father, Tennyson offered to read me certain poems he had written about Arthur, which his friends "seemed to approve." He then brought forth a bundle of beautifully copied verse: the name "In Memoriam" I do not think he used; and read several pieces. One was No. CIII, "On that last night...," which friends had specially admired: others from the early series describing the ship sailing "from the Italian shore" (No. IX): and that, I think, where parents or sweetheart await a son's or a lover's return.

Poetry so rich and concentrated as this, and heard now for the first time from the lips of one who loved and mourned so deeply, I could but partly grasp, and knew not how to praise aright. But Tennyson's sweet-natured kindness, when he could give pleasure, down to the very last day and hour, I have never found exhaustible: and, taking up one of those note-books (upon which, as they lay about his room, many friends must have looked as mines of hidden treasure), he went on to read certain songs which he thought he might do well to place between the sections of "The Princess." Thus, "Sweet and low," "The splendour falls," "Ask me no more" (on which he mentioned having observed the cloud shaping itself as described above the mountain top), passed before me; giving the sense of some great and splendid procession slowly unrolling itself, and that to the sound of its own music. In some cases also (whether in all, I have forgotten) he had provided second songs; one of which, painting the assault of warriors on a town, if I rightly remember, struck me as singularly brilliant. But when I afterwards enquired, the precious note-book had been mislaid: and lay *perdu* during his lifetime.

Tennyson's ready friendliness led him to be my companion half-way to Hampstead; and I left him with the sense that the Gateway before named had been personally opened to me, and a dim perception that the man was even greater than the work: a perception, as the years went by, to be revealed how clearly! and, I trust, to be recognized throughout these memorials, like the deep rich bass note of the violoncello, supporting the melodies above it.

Yet, whether from lack of courage or of chance, the next meeting was not (I believe) till the late autumn of 1850, when Tennyson, married in the June preceding, had fixed himself in Twickenham, within two miles of which town my own employment had then carried me. Here, in an old-fashioned Queen-Anne-like house, one of those built for the Court, called Chapel-House from its situation, with tall narrow windows and fittings of carved oak, I saw Tennyson standing by a lofty fireplace, his bride, long sought and lately won, near him

resting on a sofa. A somewhat gruff-sounding "So you have found me out" were the first words. No doubt I looked duly guilty. But she, who was to be to me a friend no less loved and honoured—the

Perfect woman, perfect wife,
Tender spiritual face,

of the Duke of Argyll's deeply-felt "Elegy" (and she will not blame me for this quotation)—at once said, "You need not take Ally literally: he is glad to see you; but we came here to escape from the too frequent interruptions of London." He laughed and agreed. *Causa finita est*, I might have thought when leaving; for henceforth, through the three following years, either in Montpelier Row, or at top of a tower which had been allotted to me as a smoking-den study in the grounds of the house where I was living, we met often. I remember long talks, and gay laughter, and things comic and serious discussed; the impression, the charm, and the gain for life; but the "effacing finger" has spared little beyond. It was only those earliest meetings which engraved themselves ineffaceably upon the mind; and with few more such detailed scenes shall I burden the reader.

In several of his summer journeys, whilst his own sons were children, Tennyson asked me to be his companion:—equally a privilege and a pleasure. Travelling together is said to bring out the whole man, in his natural gifts, his manners, his good sense and temper, or otherwise. My sketch of the poet (so far as it goes) will easily make good these points. Time after time I proved that no comrade could be more steadily charming, more deeply interesting, more considerate, not only to myself, but to all fellow-creatures in all stations of life he mixed with. If any of the inevitable rubs of the road met us, they were presently evaporated by his cheery honest laughter: his force of observation, fine yet always discriminating, brought enjoyment and sunlight into every scene. Like all eminently true men, Tennyson was a far simpler problem than some have fancied. He would never spoil the pleasant *laissez aller* of a journey by strict planning for the future. "We will talk of it after to-morrow's after-breakfast pipe," he would say. It was also his way that when we had entered on some scene of special beauty or grandeur, after enjoying it together, he should always withdraw wholly from sight, and study the view as it were in a little artificial solitude. Unless he worshipped thus "in the Temple's inner shrine" the spirit of the scene could not fully reveal itself.

It is not, however, to be hence inferred that this dear and honoured companion had anything which could be rightly called a recluse or exclusive temper. No one, in fact, could be less willing to be left to

solitary wandering; to hermit-like seclusion. But on this point I shall touch again.

With some of Tennyson's family, and early friends, Spedding, Venables, C. Spring Rice, and his own greatly loved and gifted brother Charles, a poet equally exquisite and unappreciated, A. de Vere, and others, now mostly passed away, then or afterwards I became gradually acquainted. In September, 1852, a great gathering of them was held at Hallam's christening. Thither came the baby's illustrious Godfather, in vigorous old age, nobly resigned, though overshadowed by the loss of his son Henry in 1850; there I first saw Robert Browning (his wife detained by sickness); and there also Mrs T. Carlyle, whose brilliant anecdotes and flashing incisive wit nearly sent some of us ignobly from the table to the floor. "Had her husband been here," said our host, "she would have sat in silence":—adding, "he has more of the woman in him."

Sometime in 1852 Tennyson read over to me his "Ode on the Duke of Wellington," discussing various points of detail. I think this was the sole occasion upon which, moved by the greatness of the man and of the memories which that colossal career called forth, the national sorrow and the loss of heroic example, he showed a certain anxiety about his own work. Yet he need not have feared. Heroism, at least since the days of Pindar or of Virgil, surely has never been sung of more heroically.

One other remembrance must belong to this period. He was speaking of a new edition of the *Poems*, then in hand, and of its contents, and agreed at once with the suggestion which I ventured, that certain of the pieces now headed "Juvenilia" had best be omitted: "Let us look them out": and between us, some six or eight were thus *obelized*. "It is, however, useless, I fear: the publisher (Moxon) will be sure to say that the edition would not sell, and *that* I cannot afford."

Some twelve or thirteen years later, when the further privilege of friendship with Browning had become mine, he also mentioned, with honest pleasure, that a fresh collected edition of his Poems was to appear. Remembering Tennyson's reception of my proposal, and thinking that it applied no less to Browning (as indeed to what poet, at least in modern days, would it not apply?)—to him in turn I suggested exclusion of his "earlier and less mature work." "Leave out anything!" cried he, in his animated way: "Certainly not: *quod scripsi, scripsi.*" By those who may read between the lines, these little anecdotes will be felt to go deep into the inner nature of the men, nor less, perhaps, into the quality of the legacies in their art which the two poets have respectively left us.

The low riverain position of Twickenham did not prove invigorating to the Tennysons, and he used laughingly to complain how malodorously thick and odious was the air from the many cabbage market-gardens all around. Hence by the close of 1853 the family removed to Farringford. They had nearly fixed themselves at S. Mary's, Trinity Hill, a house some three miles south of Axminster, which commanded a fine and uncommon view over tree and valley to the sea and lofty coast visible from Lyme. The ground of rejection was the want of sufficiently comfortable provision for the household: a point on which Master and Mistress were always sensitively considerate, with the natural result of faithful service, and an atmosphere of home comfort to the guest, as if the whole family joined in the welcome. I may illustrate this by a few words from a lady who (1881) had sent a body of working boys for a day's holiday to Aldworth: "When I told my maid how good your servants had been, she said '*that is just like them; they are the kindest people I know.*'"

At Farringford the ever-ready and genial hospitality of Tennyson and his honoured wife welcomed me at every Christmas-tide, I think, from 1854 to 1863. And either there or on his visits to London I enjoyed many other meetings. These, in after years (1875–1882), were often in London houses taken for a few weeks: and I may here note the free genial hospitality, the "honest talk and wholesome wine," with which friends (of all dates), or strangers desirous to become such, were received. The tales, in truth, which have painted Tennyson as a recluse, whether in London or in the country, could only amuse those acquainted with the ways of the family[1]. It was, indeed, more than most poets that Tennyson (as justly has been remarked about Horace[2]) felt the two impulses described by M. Arnold, one driving the poet "to the world without," and "one to solitude": although the happier circumstances of Tennyson's life allowed him less of Rome and more of Tibur and the Sabine farm than fell to the lot of the great Italian.

When it happened that Tennyson was our guest, he always begged

[1] If the poet, however, when at Farringford or Aldworth habitually reserved many hours to himself and solitary thought, he might have quoted the precedent of Michael Angelo. "Really zealous artists," as reported by a contemporary, he once said to Vittoria Colonna, "are bound to abstain from the idle trivialities and current compliments of society; not because they are haughty and intolerant by nature, but because their art imperiously claims the whole of their energies. The world is right in condemning a man who out of pure affectation or eccentricity shuts himself up alone. . . . Those, however, who act in this way naturally, because their profession obliges them to lead a recluse life, . . . ought in common justice to be tolerated. . . . Do you not know that there are sciences which demand the whole of a man?" (J. A. Symonds: *Life of M. A. Buonarrotti.*)

[2] W. T. Sellar: *Horace* (1892).

that he might not go forth alone into the "great city"; his shortness of sight and the crowded streets and crossings, with which he had now grown unfamiliarized, rendering him grateful for the sympathetic and admiring companionship which he always found. On these walks I, indeed, was then rarely able to be present. But very charming, I heard (and indeed as a guest in every way), did he make himself: nor had photography and fame then rendered him subject to that *digito monstrari prætereuntium* which he hated. Once too he was nursed in our house (1863) in an attack of that troublesome enemy, eczema: during which Mr T. Carlyle came to see him.

To that house also (February 12th, 1864) Browning brought his will, in two autograph copies which he believed identical, to be signed in presence of Tennyson and myself as witnesses. Browning had taken Mr Procter's advice upon the document: so he laughingly said something to the effect that "It would be a wonder if it were legally accurate, advised by one poet, written out by another, and witnessed by a third." And accordingly, after that much-prized friend had been taken from England and us at Palazzo Rezzonico (December 12th, 1889), it proved that the two wills differed in some point (which, however, lapse of time and change of circumstances had now rendered simply *technical*): and it yet was legally desirable that I should try to point out which document had first received Tennyson's and my signature. But we, on that long past irrevocable day, had been gay together in no formal, Court of Chancery humour: and it was impossible for me to clear up the dilemma.

For a record (and the only one of the kind preserved) of the guests at the dinner (which, followed, or preceded, *quis dicat?*) I am indebted to the kindness of one among them, Canon T. Richmond. Most have been already named among Tennyson's friends: Mr Gladstone also was one: and I may here conveniently give a slight note of a dialogue which at the time struck me forcibly, although it fell earlier (May 3rd, 1862), when he and Tennyson were guests with myself of the large-hearted and gracious lady who was then Mistress of Cliveden. There, Tennyson and I had been walking under groves by

> Sheets of hyacinth[1]
> That seem'd the heavens upbreaking thro' the earth,

—words which he recalled to me as exemplified at that moment—and were joined by Mr Gladstone. The talk presently fell upon Oxford and Cambridge; the old contention, which had bred most men of first-class eminence. The familiar names on each side were quoted; and the representative of Cambridge could not repress his immense astonishment

[1] Made in the hyacinth wood at Farringford.

when the Member for Oxford as decidedly claimed not less than equal honours for his University. This claim (in which the earlier and truly greater Bacon was, I think, ignored) rested mainly upon Bishop Butler, as a giant unrivalled in religious argument, and upon the eminence of Oxford in the sphere of Dogma, in its technical sense. I thought Tennyson was hardly less surprised at the reasons given for Oxonian eminence than at the eminence itself asserted. For dogma, it may be conjectured, was commonly an alien thing from the tone of that gifted College circle by which the poet's current of thought, in some directions, had been deeply influenced. So the rival champions were fain to leave the great problem unsolved.

Returning to the evening above-named, another guest then present was my brother William Gifford, returning now to England for a short visit, after his strangely adventurous journey through Central Arabia. Even Tennyson was not a more devout and loving student of the highest poetry than he: and the "Locksley Hall" of 1842 was among his greatest loves. He[1] now, meeting Tennyson for the first time, ventured to remark on the truth of that poem to Arabian sentiment and manner. The conjecture proved correct: and Tennyson (as I noted at the time in the volume) told us that "Locksley Hall" had, in fact, been "suggested by reading Sir William Jones' prose translation of the old Arabian *Moallakat*":—a famous collection from the work of pre-Mahommedan poets.

Upon our journeys, or at Farringford, in a low-roofed upper room, sacred to books and papers and a man's doctrine of tidiness, where we sat commonly till late (as afterwards at Aldworth), or traversing the long Down far as the Needles' Lighthouse, the lavish stores of a mind which to its own gifts added minute study of the master-works in poetry, classical, mediæval and modern, day by day were unfolded. Here, one felt, was a man who, like Wordsworth, had lived, not indeed exclusively, but essentially, *inter apices*, among the highest summits, the purest air, the region nearest Heaven. With Lucretius and Horace, *Iuvat integros accedere fontis* might have been his motto. Tennyson's conversation was hence of a peculiar quality and interest which I can rather recall in its general tone and tints than describe. Among many men gifted in talk, whom I have had the fortune to know, he, I felt, time after time, ranked highest. It would be, of course, an inaccurate impression if what has just been noted were taken to mean that the talk ran commonly upon the great aspects of life or literature or landscape. In fact, I have known no one who had so large a store of anecdote, serious and comic, but (with him) always illustrative of

[1] He said that Tennyson had the clearness of pronunciation—every syllable given—of an Arab.

human character in every phase, and always, also, given with lucid terseness clothed in perfect English speech. So sedulous, indeed, was Tennyson on this last point, that he would ever and anon good-humouredly correct certain Norfolk pronunciations which clung to me from youth; laughingly saying that he thought himself, as it were, officially a guardian of the Queen's English.

Everyone will have seen men, distinguished in some line of work, whose conversation (to take the old figure) either "smelt too strongly of the lamp," or lay quite apart from their art or craft. What, through all these years, struck me about Tennyson, was that whilst he never deviated into poetical language as such, whether in rhetoric or highly coloured phrase, yet throughout the substance of his talk the same mode of thought, the same imaginative grasp of nature, the same fineness and gentleness in his view of character, the same forbearance and toleration, the *aurea mediocritas* despised by fools and fanatics, which are stamped on his poetry, were constantly perceptible: whilst in the easy and as it were unsought choiceness, the conscientious and truth-loving precision of his words, the same personal identity revealed itself. What a strange charm lay here; how deeply illuminating the whole character, as in prolonged intercourse it gradually revealed itself! Artist and man, Tennyson was invariably true to himself, or rather, in Wordsworth's phrase, he "moved altogether"; his nature and his poetry being harmonious aspects of the same soul; as botanists tell us that flower and fruit are but transformations of root and stem and leafage. We read how, in mediæval days, conduits were made to flow with claret. But this was on great occasions only. Tennyson's fountain always ran wine.

Once more: In Mme. Récamier's *salon*, I have read, at the time when conversation was yet a fine art in Paris, guests famous for *esprit* would sit in the twilight round the stove, whilst each in turn let fly some sparkling anecdote or bon-mot, which rose and shone and died out into silence, till the next of the elect pyrotechnists was ready. Good things of this kind, as I have said, were plentiful in Tennyson's repertory. But what, to pass from the materials to the method of his conversation, eminently marked it was the continuity of the electric current. He spoke, and was silent, and spoke again: but the circuit was unbroken; there was no effort in taking up the thread, no sense of disjunction. Often I thought, had he never written a line of the poems so dear to us, his conversation alone would have made him the most interesting companion known to me[1]. From this great and gracious student of humanity, what less, indeed, could be expected? And if, as a converser, I were to compare him with Socrates, as figured for us in

[1] Fitzgerald once said: "I wish I had been A. T.'s Boswell."

the dialogues of his great disciple, I think that I should have the assent of that eminently valued friend of Tennyson's, whose long labour of love has conferred English citizenship upon Plato[1].

If we are lingering over these vanished hours, my excuse is, that in Tennyson conversation and recital expressed and indeed were the man, and cannot be omitted from any sketch which, even by imperfect hints, endeavours to perpetuate his likeness. One special charm of his society was the unvaried courteous good-nature, the simple pleasure in pleasing, which led him readily to comply with any wish expressed that he should read or repeat poetry. This was naturally most often his own: although if the choice were left free, he preferred the verse of others, notably, Shakespeare and Milton. Thus none of his friends, and few even among occasional visitors, failed to hear him read. What poetical recitation, as distinguished alike from mere reading and from dramatic utterance, should be, no definite theory seems to exist; no authoritative code. Tastes at any rate here differ widely; and casual hearers have found Tennyson's method too little varied or emphatic, his voice and delivery monotonous. Yet those who knew the speaker could easily see causes which explained and justified his method. Tennyson's grand range and "timbre" of voice; his power of modulation; his great *sostenuto* power; the *portamento* so justly dear to Italian vocalists, might be the truer word; the ample resonant utterance: all was simply no deliberate art of recital but the direct outward representative, the effluence at once of his own deepest sentiment as to what Poetry should be, and of the intention, the aspiration, of his own poems. Such had they sung themselves to him, as he thought them out, often keeping them, even when of considerable length, in memory before a syllable was placed on paper: and in strict accordance with that inner music was the audible rendering of it. Whether this conformed to common practice or not, he "could no otherwise."

I spent some days at Farringford in September, 1854, when "Maud" was in course of completion. Alexander Grant, my much-loved college comrade, and endeared to Tennyson by his sympathetic enthusiasm and charm of nature, was, if I remember right, also there: and the entrancement, the intoxication (I hope I may be allowed the word), with which we listened for the first time, from the author's lips, and almost in the first flush of creation, to those passionate lyrics of indignation and love and sorrow is before me even now when writing. Nor could anyone, I think, who heard them so recited wonder at the preference which, it is well known, Tennyson at times expressed for this poem; among his lyrical work, at least; for "In Memoriam" and the "Idylls" were not, I think, in question. "Maud," in truth, the

[1] *Sic*, July, 1893. *Iam, Requiescat in pace.*

"Wellington Ode," "Guinevere," "Enoch Arden," the "Rizpah," the "Revenge," and, in a somewhat different way, "The Northern Farmer" with its brilliant companions,—I am sure many who heard them so spoken will agree, these can never be heard again, no, nor read, to similar advantage. Something of their music, some part of their very essence, has passed with the Maker.

Various tales, more or less of "The Spiteful Letter" character, ascribing to Tennyson now vanity, now rudeness, have circulated. Hence there may be some who will have read with a little surprise, perhaps a suspicion of partial over-praise, what has been said above on his courteous good-nature and habit of ready compliance. The censures alluded to, if conversance with Tennyson during many years and many moods may be trusted, had, however, but little foundation; would never have stood the test of familiarity. From childhood itself he had been haunted by a singularly sensitive shyness, a ghost which no resolution can wholly lay. Thus, for a moment, after which smiles and natural courtesy awoke, I have known him silenced, almost frozen, before the eager unintentional eyes of a girl of fifteen. And under the stress of this nervous impulse compelled to contradict his inner self (especially when under the terror of leonization, may Johnson and Murray excuse the word!), he was, doubtless, betrayed at times into an abrupt phrase, a cold unsympathetic exterior; a moment's "defect of the rose." Then, as in dreaming the nightmare will suddenly leave us, and we find it day, that involuntary spell would vanish, and a singular frank graciousness of conversation follow, only the more charming by contrast with the chill preceding. No one could pass more rapidly from reserve to confidingness: no one throw himself into confidence more fully from the whole heart; almost (I sometimes thought) pathetic in his entire trustfulness.

Tennyson, to turn now to him as poet, although at times, when wearied by gossip or ill-natured attack, he would energetically ban Fame, and pretend (as I called it) to wish he had been a farmer on four hundred a year in a Lincolnshire valley, was intensely interested in his work: he thought, doubtless, that into it he had put his very best: he wrote always, it was impossible not to feel, with such entire conscientiousness, that when lighting upon one of the felicitous descriptive epithets in which he excelled, his pleasure was not less great simply in feeling himself true to nature, than in his success as an artist. He had, it may be hence inferred, an encouraging satisfaction in his work, which the severest censor must admit to be not only justifiable, but in itself a well-deserved incentive to progress. Of personal vanity as a poet I never saw the very smallest trace. Doubtless, he was not insensible to

the long chorus of praise which followed the comparative neglect of earlier years. But words which were sometimes referred to vanity, long experience convinced me were really due to that surprised sensitiveness I have already noticed. When reading and talking over any poem he had lately written, the point of merit, unless now and then by way of comparison with other of his analogous pieces, was never raised. One exception indeed to this silence on his own work there was which a hearer could hardly forget. We were sitting (1857 or so) late at night in the Farringford attic-room already mentioned: and Tennyson read over to me the little Theocritean Idyll "Hylas"; eminent for beauty in a treasure-house where all are beautiful. He dwelt particularly on the tender loveliness of the lines which describe how the fair youth, carried to the depths of a fountain by the enamoured Nymphs, faintly answered the call of his companion Herakles:

τρὶς μὲν Ὕλαν ἄϋσεν...
τρὶς δ' ἄρ' ὁ παῖς ὑπάκουσεν, ἀραιὰ δ' ἵκετο φωνὰ
ἐξ ὕδατος· παρεὼν δὲ μάλα σχεδὸν εἴδετο πόρρω·

*—thrice he called on Hylas, and thrice too the boy heard, and faint came the voice from the water, and near as he was, he seemed afar off.* Tennyson, if I remember rightly, ended with that involuntary half-sigh of delight which breaks forth when a sympathetic spirit closes, or turns from, some masterpiece of perfect art, in words or colours. "I should be content to die," said the author of "Locksley Hall" and "Maud" and "In Memoriam," "if I had written anything equal to this." The scene need not be spoiled by any comments.

But another incident must be added, belonging to a much later date, when Tennyson's imperial position in Poetry was fully established. And if in relating this I expose myself to censure, I will receive it *à cœur légère.*

In the company of Locker-Lampson he read to me a poem, just then prepared for publication, which I shall not name. This appeared to me at the moment—probably one of the hasty incorrect judgments which a single *hearing* is too apt to engender—considerably below his habitual proper level; and, with abruptness inexcusable, even had I been Rhadamanthus himself *in cathedrâ*, I owned that I could not find one good line in it. Little or no weight as this opinion was entitled to, a shade, a little shade, a hint, of vexation passed over the poet's face. But Locker kindly intervening said, "You should not feel vexed: he is probably the only one of your friends now left who would venture to speak out openly on such a matter." Tennyson smiled, and added (I think) a few modest words in defence of the perfunctorily ill-used poem. Nor did the occurrence (to give it too mild a name) ever make

the smallest breach in his constant readiness to read to the critic his after-work: which indeed included some of his noblest, his most unique, efforts. How few, how very few, of the "irascible race" would show such forbearance!

Let us now try to enter a little into the studio of the artist, the inner secrets of his art. More than once he said that his poems sprang often from a "nucleus"; some one word, may be, or brief melodious phrase which had floated through the brain, as it were unbidden. And perhaps at once whilst walking they were presently wrought into a little song. But if he did not write it down on the spot, the lyric fled from him irrecoverably. So, doubtless, did motives, one or two bars long, spontaneously come to Mozart or Beethoven, bringing with them a kind of inward assurance that, if seized and worked out, some "treasure for ever" of an air lay concealed behind them. The instances Tennyson mentioned have escaped me[1]: but in some of the shorter lyrics one can detect or imagine them.

I asked once, whether the praises of Arthur Hallam which "In Memoriam" sets forth did not outrun the actual facts: whether affection and poetry together had not led him to overcolour: whether now, looking back (*circ.* 1853), he believed that his friend would really have been

A potent voice of Parliament,
A pillar steadfast in the storm.

Tennyson's earnest look is still before me as he gave the assurance that he truly and fully believed that, in no form or way, had he exaggerated Arthur's wonderful promise. And perhaps I may be allowed here so far to diverge as to mention that more than one school or college contemporary of Hallam's, intimately known to me, have exactly confirmed Tennyson's judgment.

His own rule for writing participles in *ed* was to retain the vowel when it formed part of the verb; to put the apostrophe in all other cases, unless the *e* was sounded *metri gratia*, when it should be accented. Verse, of course, is here thought of.

Did he ever use a rhyming dictionary? He had tried it in earlier days, but found it of little use: "There was no natural congruity between the rhymes thus alphabetically grouped together."

In regard to published criticism, more than once he remarked that it was his misfortune, and one which he felt unable to remedy,—to be little moved by praise, but long to remember points of censure.

A word may be here added on the illustrated editions of Tennyson's

[1] Several instances have been given in these volumes.

poetry. Whilst I believe he gratefully recognized the pains taken and skill shown by Maclise in "The Princess," by A. Hughes in "Enoch Arden," and the many eminent artists who were united to decorate the *Poems*, he would often say that in one sense these renderings did not satisfy him. "I can see every scene in my poems in the mind's eye: had I been trained to draw, I could set them all down according to my own idea of each." In this matter he must have envied the power which gives an exceptional value to many among his friend Thackeray's novels.

To take another point. Much discussion has been spent, or wasted, upon so-named "spontaneous" and "learned" poetry, and the great difference supposed to lie between these two classes. The distinction is, however, clearly one of more and less, not of essentially opposed kinds. The stream of art is always continuous; by the work of his predecessors every poet and painter is inevitably conditioned. *Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona;* and before Homer also.

It is among those poets with whom traceable references to their ancestors in art are frequent, allusions which, echo-like, multiply and sweeten their own strains; far-off hints, that render the spell over the soul more magical; that Tennyson, all know, is to be classed. Yet in whatever concerns the essence of his art, the substance of his verse, the form of his music, no poet (if I may venture the criticism) has truly been more constant to himself: *Qualis ab incepto:*—in the strict sense, more original. Tennyson's colouring indeed, the tone of his poems, has gradually passed from Titian to Rembrandt; the design, as a rule, has grown at once more precise and larger in style. Some flowers, but mostly from the gardens of old and of many lands, he has transplanted: in matter of form and substance he seems but little affected; and least by his own immediate contemporaries.

It is a favourite process of our day to trace the genesis of a poet as necessitated by the general circumstances of his period and country: as if he were evolved by natural law. An amusing instance of this very dubious argument, as applied to Tennyson, may be given.

Many years ago I met the accomplished French critic M. Taine. He asked whether Mr Tennyson in his youth had not been given to luxurious living, and surrounded with things of costly beauty. I told how I had then lately visited him in the Camden Town Road second-floor lodgings: that he had gone on his way from College days with little of the world's goods, and that the picture of his style of life now drawn by the critic was imaginary. Whence had he learned it? "From the 'Recollections of the Arabian Nights,' and a few other early poems," M. Taine replied. I was glad of this meeting, as it happily enabled me to offer him a correction, perhaps of some little

value, for the book upon English literature which I understood he was preparing. Evidently his "siege was already made," at least in MS, for the lively critic listened with a disappointed air. However, when his elegant but somewhat flimsy and one-sided review of Tennyson soon after appeared, this conjecture about the poet's personal Sybaritism as the "milieu" of the early verses was barely perceptible.

Not a little ingenious labour has also wasted itself in the attempt to trace supposed previous authorities for this or that passage in Tennyson's poetry. Thus, to give another instance of these inferential fallacies; the influence of Shelley, supposed powerful and obvious in "The Lover's Tale" of 1827, I believe has been insisted on. Yet Tennyson recently assured me, when speaking of his early days, that the great lyrist was then, to his own belief, unknown to him. It was, in fact, after his College residence had begun (Feb. 1828) that Shelley became the study of the gifted Trinity circle.

Another and more vexatious error has now and then arisen from assignment to the poet's own opinion of the criticisms on life placed in the mouths of certain imaginary speakers. This misunderstanding may have been partly caused by the fact that he has carried the monodramatic form to a point of power and richness hitherto unreached, and employed it also on modern themes; more, however, from neglect by some readers to remember that in Monodrama it is essentially the mind of the character presented which lies before us, no less than in Drama proper. In each case the poet of course provides the sentiments and the words, but, even when these may happen in a general sense to accord with his own, they are only seen by us as modified in deference to the character: with the truth of which, not of his utterances, the poet is alone concerned. Shakespeare doubtless felt with, or perhaps through, Portia or Imogen: but this, because they represent womanhood in her simple loving graciousness. But the critic would almost exceed the wildness of Teutonic conjecture who should charge the dramatist with the misanthropy of Timon and Lear, or hold him personally identified with the mind of Juliet's nurse or of Emilia. Nor does anyone fancy that Tennyson's view of the mediæval Church is embodied either in Queen Eleanor or Queen Mary. But enough upon a point so obvious, that notice of it is only justified by the somewhat perverse allegations that Tennyson himself simply spoke his own thought through the madman-hero of "Maud," or the Hospital Nurse of "Emmie[1]." And, to close this subject, deeply as the spirit and the

[1] This singular blindness may be exemplified by the following extract from a professedly scientific journal (1881). Every word in the "Children's Hospital," it should be remembered, comes from the mouth of the Hospital Nurse, and, as in all

changes of his age, the great tidal waves of human thought, have moved Tennyson, throughout my intercourse, whilst he was ever ready to do justice to his contemporaries, yet never did I trace any symptom that he was affected by the latter in modes of thought or choice and treatment of his matter.

Returning now from these more general questions to actual life, let me put together such stray sayings as have survived in memory: poor gleanings, I fear, from that golden harvest of forty years.

Often, I believe, as life advanced, he would renew earlier familiarity with the great poets of all time; living habitually with the high society of Parnassus. Thus a portable copy of Homer which some friend had given him he had in his hands on our Cornish journey (1860), and kept sitting down to read as we wandered over a wild rock-island in the Scillies. We took Homer, however, so much for granted, that I do not recall many discussions in honour of *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. It would have seemed like praising "Monte Rosa."—On Pindar he once said, "He is a kind of Australian poet; has long tracts of gravel, with immensely large nuggets imbedded." This was in reference to the obscurity and inequality in the Odes: a hasty judgment, perhaps, on that colossal genius, if his work be closely studied as a whole.

One evening, in that upper room which could not be entered without a rising of the heart, a sense of exaltation, as of one admitted to the central shrine of Delphi, he read out off-hand Pindar's great picture of the life of Heaven in the second Olympian into pure modern prose, splendidly lucid and musical. This feat, incomparably more difficult and effective than when the pseudo-poetic facile disguise of some archaic form of language is resorted to, so struck me, that I begged him to think of preparing a version of these all but unique relics of the Greek Heroic Ode for English readers. But he smiled and said that "in his mind the benefit of translation rested with the translator[1]." These were memorable words; but I fancy that ancient poets were at the moment before him. A decision even more trenchant by Shelley on the practical impossibility of translating poetry will be remembered by some readers.

dramatic writing, is necessarily and rightly modified to express sentiments natural to such a speaker.

The paper begins by quoting a statement that "Another of the London hospitals is in danger of entering upon a career of rampant *nursedom*"; then adding: "It is somewhat significant that in the poem in which the Laureate has recently libelled the medical profession he contrasts an angelic nurse with the coarse unfeeling doctor."

The charge of libelling a profession which Lord Tennyson, like every rational man, notoriously held always in honour, is of course nothing but an unconscious witness to the dramatic force of his poem.

[1] See p. 350.

"Why do you not write an Idyll upon the story of Ruth?" I once asked. The deep tone of conviction with which he answered still seems with me; "Do you think I could make it more poetical?"

Another time, late over the midwinter fire, reading the terrible lines in which Lucretius preaches his creed of human annihilation (Book III. especially ll. 912—977, ed. Munro): and perhaps those (Book v. 1194—1217) on the uselessness of prayer, and the sublime but oppressive fear inevitable to the thoughtful mind in the awful vision of the star-lighted heavens:—so carried away and overwhelmed were the readers by the poignant force of the great poet, that, next morning, when dawn and daylight had brought their blessed natural healing to morbid thoughts, it was laughingly agreed that Lucretius had left us last night all but converts to his heart-crushing atheism.

More than once did Tennyson impress upon me that Milton, our "mighty-mouth'd inventor of harmonies," must have framed his metre upon that "ocean-roll of rhythm" which underlies the hexameters of Virgil: quoting as a perfect example the four lines, "Continuo ventis surgentibus..." (*Geor.* I. 356), in which the rising of a storm is painted. And similarly was he deeply moved by the Roman dignity which Horace has imparted to the Sapphic in the *Non enim gazæ*... (Book II. 16): although in general Tennyson did not admire the Horatian treatment of that metre, which he would audaciously define, alluding to the "Adonic" fourth line, as "like a pig with its tail tightly curled." And he highly valued the solemn pathos of that great but heart-saddening Elegy on Cornelia by Propertius, *Desine, Paulle*...

Not less fragmentary are the stray relics surviving from discourse on later poetry. I had put the scheme of my *Golden Treasury* before him during a walk near the Land's End in the late summer of 1860, and he encouraged me to proceed, barring only any poems by himself from insertion in an anthology whose title claimed excellence for its contents. And at the Christmas-tide following, the gathered materials, already submitted to the judgment of two friends of taste (one, the very able sculptor, T. Woolner, lately taken from us), were laid before Tennyson for final judgment. This judgment, in some very few cases then not followed, has been now (1891) carried out by omission of Constable's "Diaphenia," XV.; Sewell's "Damon," CLXIII., and Shelley's *Life of Life*...: about which Tennyson remarked that it was one of those flights in which the poet "seemed to go up, and burst." Between Shakespeare's Sonnets he hardly liked to decide, all were so powerful. With most by far of the pieces submitted he was already acquainted: but I seem to remember more or less special praise of Lodge's "Rosaline," of "My Love in her attire...": and the "Emigrant's Song," by Marvell. For some poems by that writer then with difficulty accessible, he had a special

admiration: delighting to read, with a voice hardly yet to me silent, and dwelling more than once, on the magnificent hyperbole, the powerful union of pathos and humour in the lines "To his coy Mistress," where Marvell that says

> Had we but world enough, and time,
> This coyness, lady, were no crime...
> ....I would
> Love you ten years before the Flood,
> And you should, if you please, refuse
> Till the conversion of the Jews....
>
> But at my back I always hear
> Time's wingéd chariot hurrying near;
> And yonder all before us lie
> Deserts of vast Eternity....

Youth, therefore, Marvell proceeds, is the time for love;

> Let us roll all our strength, and all
> Our sweetness up into one ball,
> And tear our pleasures with rough strife
> Through the iron gates of life:

on this line remarking that he could fancy *grates* would have intensified Marvell's image.

After reading Cowper's "Poplar Field": "People nowadays, I believe, hold this style and metre light; I wish there were any who could put words together with such exquisite flow and evenness." Presently we reached the same poet's stanzas to Mary Unwin. He read them, yet could barely read them, so deeply was he touched by their tender, their almost agonizing pathos. And once when I asked him for the "Lines on my Mother's Portrait," his voice faltered as he said he would, if I wished it; but he knew he should break down.

Petrarch, now stupidly undervalued, furnished a not dissimilar instance, in the ethereally-beautiful lines on the death of Laura ("Trionfo della Morte," Cap. 1):

> Non come fiamma che per forza è spenta,
> Ma che per se medesma si consume,
> Se n' andò in pace l' anima contenta;
> A guisa d' un soave e chiaro lume,
> Cui nutrimento a poco a poco manca,
> Tenendo al fin il suo usato costume.

I remember still the tenderness with which he dwelt on the words, the sigh of delight—almost perhaps, the tears—that came naturally to the

sensitive soul, as he ended. "It is the pathos of *beauty*," Chateaubriand finely remarks, "which is the most perfectly pathetic."

And Petrarch's own contemporary English admirer, again, supplied Tennyson with another favourite passage; that in the "Knight's Tale," where Arcite, dying, commends his soul as a legacy to his love Emilie:

> Alas the wo! alas the peinës strong...
> * * * *
> What is this world? what axen men to have?
> Now with his love, now in his coldë grave,
> Alone withouten any compagnie.

It is with a doubly pathetic echo that the tone, amorously lingering, which this dear friend always rendered Chaucer's last line, now returns to me.

These are small details, and somewhat egoistic: yet I hope for pardon. We shall hear that voice no more.

Here may be also noticed an incident of Tennyson's meeting with A. H. Clough, on a journey to the Pyrenees (1861). Clough's health was then fast failing; and Tennyson, speaking of him afterwards with the strong personal interest which he always exercised, as it were by some resistless spell, over those who knew him, said that Clough as he lay on the grass in some lovely valley near Cauteretz, had read aloud passages from his last and unfinished poem, the series of tales named "Mari Magno." These narratives of modern life have much delicately touched feeling, some passionate moments. "When he read them his voice faltered at times: like every poet, *he was moved by his own pathos.*"

Resuming Tennyson's *Golden Treasury* comments, which naturally fixed themselves in memory, another little poem greatly moved him: perhaps he was not very familiar with it: Scott's "Maid of Neidpath." This also he read, adding after the last stanza, "Almost more pathetic than a man has the right to be." We may perhaps say as much of "The Children's Hospital."

Tennyson was much struck by the plain force of Byron's "Elegy on Thyrza," and Moore's "Light of other Days"; saying of the last, "*O si sic omnia!*" In Wolfe's noble "Burial of Sir John Moore" he wished the last line but two could be changed; at the close of Hood's "Bridge of Sighs" "Her evil *behaviour*" was a slight defect in that masterpiece. And the infelicitous "mermaid's song *condoles*" of the "Battle of the Baltic" tempted him to a "How easily could a little blot like this be cured! If we had but Tom Campbell in the room to point it out to him": adding, however, a tale how Rogers had dóne the same office for another poem; and how Campbell had bounced out of the

room, with a "Hang it! I should like to see the man who would dare to correct me!"

Here let me add, that the selections from his own Lyrical poetry (1885), with the formation of which I was honoured by him, were submitted for his approval, and that those from "In Memoriam" (peculiarly difficult to frame, from the reasons which I have noted above in regard to Shakespeare's Sonnets) follow a list which he gave me.

Memory supplies little else upon the poets. Shakespeare and Milton, as before observed, he read aloud by preference: always coming to *Paradise Lost* with manifest pleasure and reverent admiration: like Keats, devoted to

Miltonian storms, and more, Miltonian tenderness:

nor did voice and manner ever serve him better. I may name the passage describing the Gate of Heaven (*Par. Lost*, III. 501—509), specially singled out for delicate beauty: and the great vision of Eden (Book IV. 205—311), which he read aloud at Ardtornish in Morvern (August, 1853), and often afterwards; dwelling always on the peculiar grace of lines 246—263. These are small points, and (with much else here written down) he would have laughed at me in his genial way for recording them. Yet some, I think, will look out the passages named, and read them with new interest.

One of Sir P. Sidney's songs to *Stella* he specially admired:

Only Joy, now here you are,
Fit to hear and ease my care...

with its pretty refrain—

Take me to thee, and thee to me:
"No, no, no, no, my Dear, let be!"

From Donne he would quote the "Valediction, forbidding Mourning," the last four stanzas:

Our two souls...

where the poet compares himself to the moving leg, his love to the central, of the compass when describing a circle: praising its wonderful ingenuity. And similarly he would often quote the lines from the "Dunciad" upon the evening of Lord Mayor's Day:

Now Night descending, the proud scene was o'er,
But lived in Settle's numbers *one day more.*

For their delicate music, again, he loved eight lines by his old friend S. Rogers, describing a girl imprisoned in some castle:

Caged in old woods...

Keats, more than once, he said, "promised securely more than any English poet since Milton."

Edgar Poe's "Raven," with all its skill, was too artificial for genuine poetry. That writer's ingenious narrative, in one of his prose essays, how the whole poem had been generated first from the vowel *O*, then from the word *more*, and so forth even to the details, he would not accept: it was another piece of artificiality[1].

Tennyson often spoke of Goethe, in regard to his poetry. Much might be inferior: but as a lyrist certain pieces put him in the first rank. Amongst these favourites, which he gladly would read, were the "Nachgefühl": "Der Abschied," admired for its exquisite tenderness: he had *les larmes dans la voix* when he reached the second stanza,

Traurig wird in dieser Stunde...:

and perhaps even more did he prize the beautiful song "An den Mond," where I find he has in my copy tremulously pencil-marked the last two stanzas; familiar, doubtless, himself with the mysterious thoughts which at night-time "wander through the labyrinth of the bosom."

These poems are from Goethe's early *Lieder*; and in the same class of beauty is the much later "Elegie," of which Tennyson quoted two stanzas of "what I call Shakespearian beauty"; those beginning

Du hast gut reden...

and ending

Da bleibt kein Rath als gränzenlose Thränen.

Highly rated also, for solemn thought and deep calm insight into human life, were the well-known "Gränzen der Menschheit" and "Das Göttliche." On *Faust* I remember no remark[2].

Another poem, valued for its stately beauty and tender feeling for a friend, was that upon the sight of Schiller's skull; which he read out in the Inn at York (1853); on the same occasion, as it chanced, repeating that graceful piece of colour, the

Go not, happy day...

which found a place in "Maud"; at once pleased and amused by his "red man" and "red babe," as effective points of crimson in that rosy landscape. Of Heine, he did not find the songs remained with him in memory, like Goethe's.

A few scraps remain. It was with a sort of reverence that he would name certain poets of supreme dignity. Thus with Wordsworth. Yet critical truth compelled him, when the point was raised, to confess the inequality of Wordsworth's work, the heaviness of style seen somewhat

[1] He ranked Poe's tales very high as works of genius; see p. 592.

[2] The Prologue and songs in *Faust* he often quoted with lavish praise. T.

too often in poems, the subjects of which more or less defied successful treatment. In these, he would say, "Wordsworth seemed to him *thick-ankled.*" "Crabbe has given us the most varied and numerous portraits of character after Shakespeare."—In G. Meredith's first little volume he was delighted by the "Love in a Valley" (as printed in 1851: the text in later issues has been greatly changed): in Rossetti's, the passion and imaginative power of the sonnet "Nuptial Sleep" impressed him deeply. And the writer will here ask pardon, if he does not deny himself the pleasure of noting that a little lyric of his own,

Ask what you will, my own and only Love,

was warmly praised by Tennyson. But enough, if not too much, of these side-gleams and snatches: although my hope is that in years to come, when Tennyson's great place in poetry shall be more fully and freely acknowledged than it has yet been, the slight notes here offered of the books and passages which he loved will have a peculiar interest of their own. One would surely give much for details of this nature upon Shakespeare or Milton.

Sir W. Scott's short tale, *My Aunt Margaret's Mirror*[1] (how little known!), he once spoke of as the finest of all ghost or magical stories. The novel by Michael Scott, *Tom Cringle's Log*, Tennyson greatly admired for its marvellous vividness of description: instancing the narrative of the approach to Santiago de Cuba in chapter XII. *Euphranor*, that little dialogue, lively and discursive, by his gifted friend Edward Fitzgerald, which, here and there, in style comes so near Plato, he also highly esteemed; admiring especially (and no wonder!) the brilliant closing picture of a boat-race, with its glimpse of Whewell, "the high crest and blowing forelock of Phidippus's mare, and he himself shouting encouragement to his crew, conspicuous over all."

Tennyson about the same time, I think, commended to me warmly Fitzgerald's famous *Omar* paraphrase, in which old Oriental thought is so marvellously refracted through the atmosphere of modern English style. This poem, at the date to which my literary notes mostly refer, was very scantily accessible to general readers in that limited first edition which contains the original preface in prose, one hardly knows whether more exquisite for its subtlety or its simplicity, and a text, not, perhaps, always altered in later issues to advantage. To the *Omar*, and its highly-valued author, Tennyson afterwards did public honour in the "Prologue and Epilogue to 'Tiresias'": two lyrics which, short as they are, truly rank among masterpieces of rendering, in pure poetry, the humorous and the pathetic sides of common life: balanced evenly between realistic and ideal treatment: truly, a rare triumph.

[1] *The Tapestried Chamber* also he greatly admired.

Gentleness, discriminating yet ever tolerant criticism, resolute,—indeed, indignant—rejection of all "literary gossip," to sum up the general impression left, marked Tennyson's attitude towards contemporary writers. I remember once attempting a silly joke about "balderdash" in reference to a recently published poem by S. Dobell. "That was a very easy and weak way of trying to dispose of a book," he at once said (nor was this the only time in which he performed analogous acts of a true friend's kindness): and then went on to point out the real merits of *Balder*; although, as he also noted about Mrs B. Browning's "Aurora Leigh," the fault was that both works, striking as they were in many phrases, might rather be defined as "organizable lymph" than as compacted and vertebrate poems. And so, when I once casually remarked, Poland being mentioned, that all interest about that country was now dead, he replied with deep earnest feeling how passionately he in youth, and still, felt for the cruel fate of Poland; and that such insensibility was morally wrong.

Kindness of heart, a deep and constant sense of human limitations, wide knowledge, natural refinement and penetration, the union of these essential elements in that much disputed quality, good taste, brought with it that rare and delightful result, the power of doing equal justice to the small as the great things of art. Hence of all critics known to me Tennyson most surely and fairly would point out for praise the successful touches in minor poetry. Much as he loved Horace, he rose above the epigrammatic narrowness of his brilliant *Non di, non homines...*: deeply conscious how difficult all fine art is, uniting always charity with justice, and prompt to be "kindly to his kind."

Let me in conclusion put together a few scattered memories (aided here by a brief journal) of the later visits when I was allowed to enjoy the society of this friend, faithful and true for more than forty years.

During many, perhaps most, of the summers since my first journey to Aldworth in the autumn of 1869, when the family was hardly yet settled in their new home, it was thither (not as of old, to Farringford) that its convenient vicinity to London led me.

Thus, on October 27th, 1886, he read aloud to me that piece of almost too terrible beauty, the "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After," in which he has concentrated a wealth of thought and observance of life, a passion, whether of tenderness or of "world-sorrow," such as had been reached neither in the youthful "Locksley," nor in the later "Maud." When, truly, has our Virgil-Lucretius thrown his whole soul into song more completely than in these (if of any human work one may speak so) imperishable lines, dark as they are with the sadness by which the poet ransoms, as it were, his prophetic insight into Humanity? As he

read them, in the spacious dimly-lighted room, with that "large utterance" before noticed, it was a scene such as only Rembrandt, in his mood of deepest intensity, could have adequately rendered.

The phrase "Virgil-Lucretius" I have used above, thinking of the second "Locksley Hall" and perhaps a few other lesser lyrics of Tennyson's later years, when the sense of the enormous significance of Life and of Death, of Here and Hereafter, Shadow and Substance, always vividly realized together by him, had naturally grown more vivid. Yet the gay boyish humour, the sunny sweetness, the delight in life, these never failed. For those solemn words, *as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing*, might be truly applied to the innermost being of this poet, whether in regard to his life, or his poetry. The man, rather than the writer, has been the subject of my story: but perhaps a few words of general survey may be permitted. It is, however, for "the days that remain" to bear witness to his real place in the great hierarchy, amongst whom Dante boldly yet justly ranked himself. But if we look at Tennyson's work in a two-fold aspect:—*Here*, on the exquisite art in which, throughout, his verse is clothed, the lucid beauty of the form, the melody almost audible as music, the mysterious skill by which the words used constantly strike as the *inevitable* words (and hence, unforgettable), the subtle allusive touches, by which a secondary image is suggested to enrich the leading thought, as the harmonic "partials" give richness to the note struck upon the string: *There*, when we think of the vast fertility in subject and treatment, united with happy selection of motive, the wide range of character, the dramatic force of impersonation, the pathos in every variety, the mastery over the comic and the tragic alike, above all, perhaps, those phrases of luminous insight which spring direct from imaginative observation of Humanity, true for all time, coming from the heart to the heart—his work will probably be found to lie somewhere between that of Virgil and Shakespeare: having its portion, if I may venture on the phrase, in the inspiration of both.

In Nov. 1888 I visited Aldworth shortly after death had suddenly carried off my dearly-loved adventurous brother Gifford (September 30) at Montevideo. He first met Tennyson in 1864, when the curious remark about the Arabian influence operative upon "Locksley Hall," already recorded, was made: and again in 1868. They saw each other no more until, in the late summer of 1887, Mr A. Macmillan kindly brought Gifford to Aldworth for an afternoon from his house at Liphook not far distant. Tennyson now read to me the beautiful lines named "Ulysses" after the title of my brother's last narrative of travel: a commemoration the honour of which he did not live to enjoy. "I think he was the cleverest man I ever met," when speaking of that visit,

Tennyson twice said, and his remark has been repeated to me by other witnesses. And I may perhaps be allowed to refer to my dear brother's narrative of his journey through Central Arabia, to the "Ulysses" and other volumes, as the justification of that eulogy, *laudes viri laudatissimi.*

In 1889 I found Tennyson in the gradual process of recovery from the terrible illness of the preceding year, when (as Sir A. Clark said to me at the time) "he had been as near death as a man could be without dying." Doubtless, from the care of that great physician, who has now followed him to the grave, Tennyson had received all the aid which human skill could give. And (at all but eighty) so great were his physical powers that he led me down one of his favourite walks to the Sussex weald some 400 feet below the house, and then climbed the hill, with steps that allowed no hesitation to his companions, and resting only here and there; as indeed the heat of July and the charm of a landscape so singularly beautiful rendered natural. That most true friend, one of the very few who, I think, really replaced for Tennyson the old fraternal circle of Trinity, the Duke of Argyll, was our companion. He was the sole other visitor at the time: and he will, I hope, not grudge my saying that never did I listen to better talk than that between those two as we sate at tea on the garden terrace. Even that noble view, sixty miles of landscape fading into the blue downs of Kent, the "immense plain" which Tennyson confessed "sometimes weighed upon his spirits," would have been unheeded by a lover of Nature, seeing it for the first time, in presence of discourse so equal, so sincere, so satisfying; never trifling, yet never didactic; poised equally, as it seemed to me, between seriousness and humour:

Partem aliquam, venti, divom referatis ad auris!

one might have excusably said. From the indestructibility of Force some indeed have argued that the air-waves of sound somewhere in the Unknown preserve every human word ever spoken. But from my memory, alas! that discourse has been swept into the void.

Upon this occasion it was that I noted Tennyson's first open concession to age and "the years as they retreated." Hitherto, after dinner and dessert, and a short time to himself, his guests had been invited to the poet's own room, whether first the attic at Farringford, or the high hall provided next at Aldworth, *novo Sublime ritu...atrium*, or that added in "the Island" home: in one or other of which, with an interlude, perhaps, below stairs, we might sit, and smoke, talk or be silent, hearing often the latest poem, through hours which no one cared to number. But in 1889 the interval of solitude was prolonged to 10 P.M. or later; the session, however, when it came, was hardly abridged.

At Aldworth in July 1890 a friendliness welcomed me even more delicate and tender than I had met since the days of Twickenham. The greatest of all losses had fallen on me: I could not have come, but for the thought not only of the years during which the affection rendered me by Tennyson and his devoted wife had never slackened, but of the years, also, now gathering over them. In contrast to such thoughts, I found the house brightened by the presence of the baby Lionel, and the grandfather himself seemingly restored to earlier health. On the terrace he asked if I should care to hear a classical legend which he had lately completed upon the lines of an early attempt. I thought it would have been read from the MS. But he began at once where we sat, in the left-hand recess, and repeated without pause or lapse of memory the whole of that beautiful "Œnone" which, latest to appear of all his Hellenic Idylls, is perhaps the one most instinct with the peculiar grace of Grecian simplicity [1].

Illness in 1891 deferred a visit till October, when, after the lapse of near thirty years (traversing the street which meanwhile had grown up from Yarmouth onwards, "roofs of slated hideousness"), I was once more beneath the shelter of Farringford and among its trees, that ilex-*silva...iugerum paucorum*, so loved by its owner, which had meanwhile grown up to bowery overshadowing massiveness. Much lessened were now the hours of converse: for the first time during three-and-forty years the evening session was in general exchanged for rest. But the bright welcome, the readiness to please, the charm, even the ever-youthfulness which made it difficult to think of him and old age together, all were there.

But we are nearing the end. In May, 1892, bodily decline had now too distinctly set in. The extent of this was unknown to me; nor, though lessened physical strength was perceptible, with Tennyson's unconquerable vigour of mind, and recent seeming rescue from the very grasp of death, did I admit any final fear. To those who love, such old age in fact appears as if already immortal.

Daily, from the little bower beyond the bridge, at the foot of his great Down, now no longer, as of old, constantly, except in mid-winter, climbed and traversed, to the Needles' lighthouse, did I accompany him in a narrower two-mile circuit of his fields and farms and cottages. One picturesque little group, which Tennyson had built, and marked with tablets bearing the conjoined initials of his wife and himself, we found receiving graceful record at the hand of Mr Birket Foster [2].

[1] My father often said that this second "Œnone" had more of the pure Greek simplicity than the first "Œnone." T.

[2] Mrs Allingham's pictures of the Farringford cottages are well-known to those who attend her exhibitions, and were much liked by Tennyson.

Tennyson was suffering from cough, by which, always physically sensitive in a high degree, he was much depressed. But the old self would ever and anon break forth, as he pointed out to me some choice bit of that peculiar miniature beauty which marks the yet-unspoiled portions of the Island, or where in past days he had enjoyed the society of that singularly attractive and valued friend, Mr W. G. Ward. Ward's fervent Catholicism is well known; with Monteith, Simeon, and Aubrey de Vere, also friends so highly and so justly prized, he was devoted to the Roman Church. But it was eminently characteristic of Tennyson that this difference in belief seemed always only to strengthen the union between them.

Let me once more, as at the beginning of these notes, ask pardon, if, with too little of worth to tell, and too much, perhaps, of egotism, I linger over my story. At the close of this visit my hosts asked, "Would not I bring my daughters for a sight of Aldworth when Summer came?" Thus it was that, the customary migration from Farringford being somewhat delayed, July 19th, 1892, proved to be the last earthly meeting-time and sight of him whose friendship had been to me from youth onwards among the greatest blessings of life,—the most instructive, the most elevating.

"*Praise*," said Wordsworth, "*is a dangerous thing*": and, except inferentially or as it were inevitably, my desire has been to exclude it from these *Memorabilia*; if, indeed, I am not, rather, liable to censure for an unrepented unheroic over-familiarity. Now, however, whilst traversing the steep road from Haslemere to Blackdown, between ancient seemly cottages such as England only shows, and then, shadowy hedgerow trees, to the open downs, it seemed strange to my dear companions and me to remember that this visit was not only to the one who in all English-speaking lands could be truly named of all Englishmen at once both the most widely known and the most uniformly admired, but who also was, at any rate throughout every region of European civilization, absolutely the greatest of living poets. But the simple kindliness of greeting which the girls met from Tennyson with his wife and son and son's wife soon put aside the sense of approaching Royalty. And we had the added happiness of a day when, free from special pain or weakness, we found ourselves with Tennyson in his almost boy-like humour of openness and enjoyment, and seeking only how to make the pleasure of the visit more pleasant to youthful guests. Laughingly he pointed out how, though unable then to boast of the luxuriance of locks conspicuous in that excellent *chiar' oscuro* portrait by Laurence (now at Aldworth), through which he was first made familiar to everyone, yet there was not a single white hair on his head. Overruling a little remonstrance from Hallam upon his cough, he took

the sheets of the then-unpublished "Churchwarden," and read it through with due justice to the Lincolnshire dialect, clearly as ever, and like all true humourists, slyly enjoying his own fun. For as unless he weeps himself, who would make us weep, so it is with laughter.

Then followed a curious episode. Rain was falling, and only a short walk through the beautiful garden and hillside below Aldworth possible. So a phonograph which Mr Edison, a few years back, had presented to Tennyson was brought forth and set in motion. Into this machine, at the time when given, he had spoken the Bugle-song from "The Princess," —a lyric which, through its cadences from loud to low, from voice to echo, was specially adapted to display the powers of the instrument[1]. After a concert and some other show-pieces, followed this song. Tennyson said he could not now recite it with the fullness of voice which was his when he gave it to the keeping of the phonograph: yet, at my request, ever-kind, he repeated the first stanza; and indeed there was little to be missed in his intonation. We found then, what the preceding musical reproductions had led me to expect, that it was a rough sketch of the real voice which we had heard, but all the finer tones, the higher delicate notes omitted. Tennyson remarked that the necessity of a decided *diminuendo* in the last line of his song had rendered the final words (which were inaudible) too faint for the wave of sound to record. When, however, the (second) "Northern Farmer" followed, that poem, spoken to the phonograph with less musically dramatic effect, was rendered more perfectly.

In this case the sound was carried to the ears of each person singly by elastic tubes. Hence all that was experienced by the rest of the party was an utterance at the mouth (so to speak) of the machine, of shrill tones almost too thin for hearing. Tennyson called it "the squeak of a dying mouse": and then, with a certain shade of sadness in the voice, "I often think *that* represents fame after a man's death; the *other*, contemporary glory." This was one of the very few occasions on which I have heard him touch on that subject, not perhaps, always treated by poets with such reticence.

This allusion to fame suggested to him two small stories which may be already known, although new to his hearers. Farringford, several years since, was the scene of both. Some traveller passing the gate in a carriage hired at Freshwater asked "Whose house was this?" "Nobody's in particular," the driver replied. "But whose is it?" "Mr Tennyson's." "Do you call him nobody? He is a great man!"

[1] Tennyson's baby grandson laughed uproariously as his father shouted down the tube; Tennyson thereupon laughed into the phonograph after the words—"Blow, bugle, blow"; and this laugh has a most weird effect on the reproduction.

"He a great man! why, he only keeps one man, and he don't sleep in the house."

Again: "A lady had been staying with us, and brought her maid. As the visit came to an end, she began a gossip with one of our housemaids (a temporary one) upon the family. 'What do you think of Mrs Tennyson?' 'O, she is an angel!' 'And what of your master?' 'Why (with an inexpressibly scornful air), he is only a public writer.'"

Trivial tales, are they not? Yet they may serve to show how the lightsome spirit of youth, the "royal heart of innocence" survived, even though he was already far on in mortal sickness. And thus, even as he himself wished it of what soon, too soon, was to come, there was no sadness about our parting that evening: only the long-known cordial grasp, the little *tenerezza* in the voice. I said to myself, "This we need not think of as Farewell." Six days later, the Duke of Argyll paid his last visit, and judged the situation more truly and more mournfully.

One word, as we quit this memorable family group, may be ventured upon that beauty of united life which for more than forty years I ever found the atmosphere of the house: the chivalrous tone of that "school for husbands," as I often named it to myself: the high spiritual nature and aim, "yes, higher than I am," he once said when twilight favoured such confidence, of her to whom the most deeply-felt of all his lines were addressed:

Dear, near, and true

to him from youth to age, the counsellor to whom he never looked in vain for aid and comfort; but who now (May, 1893), in the words of Arthur Hallam's father, "submits to the righteous Will of Heaven which has ordained her to be his survivor."

Imperfect, sad, yet with a certain sweetness, my task is now ended. It is for others, for those nearer and dearer, for friends of more skill and insight, to frame some portrait in words of this man, emphatically not less good than great in the full range of his character. My attempt throughout has been only to offer truly, and "nothing extenuated," such lesser incidental traits as may, taken together, present a partial resemblance for the reader's own judgment. But the sketch will be a failure if it does not give those who care to read it the one impression which, above all others, these three-and-forty years of unwavering friendship have left with me as the dominant note of Alfred Tennyson,—Loveableness.

## PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF TENNYSON, BY THE DUKE OF ARGYLL.

MY DEAR HALLAM,

Were it not that even details, which would be trivial when they concern ordinary men, may well be of lasting interest when they concern one of the immortals I should reluctantly attempt to add anything to the many personal characteristics which you have so well indicated in your memorial pages. But having enjoyed your father's friendship for forty years I may be allowed on your invitation to say a few words about him.

The first words I heard him utter remain indelibly impressed upon my memory. On being introduced to him at an evening party in the house of Lord John Russell, I said, perhaps with some emotion, "I am so glad to know you." Not in the tone or voice of a mere conventional reply, but in the accents of sincere humility he answered, "You won't find much in me—after all." The effect which these words produced upon me at the moment was deepened every time I saw him. Your father was a man of the noblest humility I have ever known. It was not that he was unconscious of his own powers. It was not that he was indifferent to the appreciation of them by others. But it was that he was far more continually conscious of the limitations upon them in face of those problems of the universe with which, in thought, he was habitually dealing. In his inner spirit he seemed to me to be always feeling his own later words:

"But what am I?
An infant crying in the night:
An infant crying for the light:
And with no language but a cry."

In close connection with this frame of mind was the profound reverence of his character. In speculation he was often bold—in a sense he was sometimes even daring. But he was always reverent,—hating all levity or flippancy in thought or language about divine things. He was full of a kind of awful wonder,—of a silent worship. His direct theological utterances were few. But he said enough to show that he clung to the divine truths of the "creed of creeds." Although perfectly tolerant as regarded the doubts and difficulties of his time, he was impatient of any rough or contemptuous treatment of the great Christian verities, and sometimes indignantly rebuked it. Both his reverence and his humility were revolted by disdain. On one of the last occasions on

which I ever walked with him in his garden at Aldworth, it had been a wet day and all the grass and shrubs were dripping with rain. We were walking in single file to avoid brushing the drop-laden boughs, when after something had been said in our conversation which brought up this subject, he suddenly stopped, turned round, confronted me, and said "I hate scorn" with an emphasis which showed how deep-seated in his nature that hatred was. We must all remember how finely this sentiment is expressed in the description of Modred in "Guinevere."

The absolute truthfulness of your father was a striking feature in his character. We are too apt to think of this as common, and so it is, up to a conventional standard which is determined by the public opinion of society from time to time. But in its highest manifestations, as they were seen in him, I always think that truthfulness is one of the rarest of human attributes. The degrees are innumerable in which truth is more or less compromised in the usages of society, in the pursuit of politics, and of business, as well as in controversy of all kinds. Your father's nature was in all things so simple and sincere that it made him sometimes abrupt and apparently rough in manner.

I recollect an amusing instance of this which occurred many years ago. At that time it was rather usual in a certain literary circle to give breakfasts in London at which very often there were most agreeable parties gathered together from all directions of the compass. Macaulay, Bishop Wilberforce, Lord Mahon, and Monckton Milnes were among the hosts whose breakfasts were most agreeable. I and my wife did our best occasionally to follow their example. On one occasion we had invited an excellent selection of friends to whom we were ambitious enough to hope that we might add the illustrious poet. He was then often with us, reading the proof-sheets of the "Idylls," and on one of these occasions the Duchess, who was an intense admirer, ventured to approach the subject, saying "We have got so and so, and so and so, and so and so to breakfast with us next Wednesday morning at ten a.m. Do you think, Mr Tennyson, that you could be persuaded to join our party?" Your father's reply left no room for further negotiations. It was simple and effective. "I should hate it, Duchess."

The inexhaustible fountains of tenderness opened in his poetry, and which "In Memoriam" more especially revealed, could hardly have been suspected from his manner. In his deeper feelings he was intensely reserved. I was therefore all the more gratified and surprised by an indication of personal friendship which was granted to me very near the close of his life. I was to return to London next morning from a visit to Aldworth. Your mother had been at dinner and had bidden us good night as usual. When, about an hour later, your father took me up to his smoking-room, as was also usual with him, we were surprised to find

your mother lying on the sofa there. Your father expressed his astonishment and said, "My dear, you ought to have gone to bed long ago." Her kind reply was, "Oh, I wished to say good-bye to the Duke again as he leaves us to-morrow morning." At that moment you entered the room and at once carried your mother off. Your father, somewhat moved as I thought, occupied himself with putting fresh coals on the fire. Then, turning to me, he said in a deep and solemn voice, without mentioning your mother's name, "It is a tender, spiritual face,—is it not?" A better description, so full of truth and of poetry, could not be given of your mother's beautiful countenance, which I had so long known and had so often admired. These are the words I have interwoven into the last verse of the Elegy[1] written on your father's death, and which your mother was so good as to accept with some kind expressions of appreciation which have been a great pleasure to me.

Although I was a younger man than your father by a good many years, I am old enough to remember the first shining of his light above the horizon, and I have seen its steady culmination in a perfect day.

Very few men of the generation whose tastes have been formed on the older poets, and who had, for the most part, resisted even the popularity of Wordsworth, could easily appreciate your father's earlier poetry. It involved not only new rhythms, but also entirely new moods and tendencies of thought. Among those who stood absolutely aloof was Lord Macaulay. I had the happiness of being the medium of introduction through which he was at last subdued. When your father entrusted me with the proof-sheets of "Guinevere" I took them to Macaulay who was my next door neighbour for some years before his death. I left the poem with him, telling him I would return next day to hear his opinion. I found him absolutely subdued, and I was much amused and interested in the few vain attempts he made even to qualify his admiration. He was, by natural disposition, highly critical. Himself a master in English prose composition, and the writer of some very beautiful bits of poetry, he could not easily surrender at discretion before an author whom he had hitherto regarded as at best the writer of some pretty lyrics. It was therefore with delight, but also with some surprise, that I heard him accost me at once, in a deeply impressed voice, with exclamations of unfeigned and reverent admiration. "Oh, it is very beautiful—very beautiful indeed," he repeated several times. Then, more moved than he was quite willing to confess, he tried to recover himself by making some critical reservations. "There is of course—" he would begin by saying,—or, "It is to be noticed however—," or some such phrase—repeated several times, but always broken off by a simple

[1] *Burdens of Belief, and other Poems* (J. Murray).

renewal of "Oh, it is very beautiful—very beautiful indeed—most touching." I confess I left him with a sense of your father's complete triumph over a very competent judge,—premonitory (as I felt assured) of his conquest over the living world and over the generations that are to come.

It was somewhere about the same time that I heard, and took a subordinate part in, a very interesting discussion in my own house on the question how far it is possible for any generation whatever to predict, with even tolerable security, how far any poet, however popular in his own time, would maintain at all a corresponding place in the estimate of future ages. The interlocutors in the discussion were old Lord Aberdeen, Mr Gladstone, Sir George Cornwall Lewis, and Lord Clarendon. The result seemed to be a general agreement that such a foreseeing is impossible. I venture to doubt the impossibility although fully admitting the many untraceable elements of deception. In your father's case I rest my assured confidence in his immortality on two strong foundations:—first, the mass, variety and elevation of thought in his poetry; and, secondly, the extraordinary perfection of form by which it is distinguished. It seems to me that for example "In Memoriam" can never die until our existing world has passed away. Sorrow is always at home here. And sorrow has never had such a voice to express all its moods whether terrible or tender. Again, your father's blank verse is as peculiar as it is magnificent. Not even the stately march of Elizabethan English in its golden time, can overpass it in sweetness or in strength. In its description of Nature in all her aspects, it is quite incomparable,—as for example, in "The Gardener's Daughter," or in the description of the thunderstorm in "Vivien."

But I must not run on into an essay on so large a subject as his poetry. I am speaking now only of what I conceive to be a few of the elements in it which may well give us an assurance of its immortality. To have been numbered amongst his personal friends I esteem as one of the greatest honors of my life.

Yours affectionately,

ARGYLL.

## EPILOGUE.

(*Unpublished.*)

Speak to me from the stormy sky!
  The wind is loud in holt and hill,
  It is not kind to be so still:
Speak to me, dearest, lest I die.

Speak to me, let me hear or see!
  Alas, my life is frail and weak:
  Seest thou my faults and wilt not speak?
They are not want of love for thee.

# APPENDIX.

## (P. 34.) *My father's talk on Milton's "Paradise Lost" to me when a boy at Marlborough.*

Bk. I. 60. "Our English language alters quickly. This great line would be almost commonplace now:

The dismal situation waste and wild."

Bk. I. 211. "I hope most of us have a higher idea in these modern times of the Almighty than this:

The will
And high permission of all-ruling Heaven
Left him at large to his own dark designs,
That with reiterated crimes he might
Heap on himself damnation."

Bk. I. 725. "I always like this, it is mystical:

From the arched roof
*Pendent by subtle magic*, many a row
Of starry lamps and blazing cressets."

Bk. II. 129. "Note the great pauses in Satan's speech."

"I think that Milton's vague hell is much more awful than Dante's hell marked off into divisions."

Bk. II. 634. "What simile was ever so vast as this?

> Then soars
> *Up to the fiery concave towering high.*
> As when far off at sea a fleet descried
> Hangs in the clouds, by equinoctial winds
> Close sailing from Bengala, or the isles
> Of Ternate and Tidore, whence merchants bring
> Their spicy drugs; they, on the trading flood,
> Through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape,
> Ply stemming nightly toward the pole: so seem'd
> Far off the flying fiend.

Then the next passage, the picture of sin that seems to be alluring at first, hideous afterwards, is fine."

Bk. II. 879. "A good instance of onomatopœia:

> On a sudden open fly
> With impetuous recoil and jarring sound
> The infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
> Harsh thunder, that the lowest bottom shook
> Of Erebus."

Bk. IV. 127. When Uriel saw Satan—

"This shows a fine dramatic feeling in Milton,—

> Disfigured, more than could befall
> Spirit of happy sort; his gestures fierce
> He mark'd, and mad demeanour, then alone,
> As he supposed, all unobserved, unseen."

"A few lines below—'Sylvan scene' and the gentle gales 'fanning their odoriferous wings' are undoubtedly commonplace now, but Milton introduced the style."

"I hate the lines about 'the spouse of Tobit's son.' They are objectionable. I do not object to the thief simile as some do."

"*Blooming* ambrosial fruit." "'Blooming' is bold." In the description of the garden he quoted "flowers worthy of Paradise" down to "without thorn the rose."

Bk. IV. 242. "'Where the unpiercèd shade' is the right reading not 'th' unpierc'd shade,' in those beautiful lines about the flowers which

> Nature boon
> Pour'd forth profuse on hill, and dale, and plain,
> Both where the morning sun first warmly smote
> The open field, and where the unpiercèd shade
> Imbrown'd the noontide bowers."

Bk. IV. 248. "What liquid lines these too—

> Groves whose rich trees wept odorous gums and balm,

or

> And sweet reluctant amorous delay,

or Bk. IV. 354,

> And in the ascending scale
> Of Heaven, the stars that usher evening rose."

"This last line is lovely because it is full of vowels, which are all different. It is even a more beautiful line than those where the repetition of the same vowels or of the same consonants sometimes are so melodious."

Bk. IV. 810. "That is a wonderful simile—

> Him thus intent Ithuriel with his spear
> Touch'd lightly, for no falsehood can endure
> Touch of celestial temper, but returns
> Of force to its own likeness; up he starts
> Discover'd and surpris'd. As when a spark
> Lights on a heap of nitrous powder, laid
> Fit for the tun, some magazine to store
> Against a rumour'd war, the smutty grain,
> With sudden blaze diffused, inflames the air;
> So started up in his own shape the fiend."

Bk. V. 277. "A seraph winged" to "colours dipt in Heaven" he would quote with admiration.

Bk. V. 336–396. And my father would humorously quote of the French cooks abroad—

> "Taste after taste upheld with kindliest change—
> * * * * * *
> No fear lest dinner cool,"

Adding, "That is a terrible bathos after the beautiful imagery, but shows Milton's simplicity."

Bk. v. 525. My father said: "Certainly Milton's physics and metaphysics are not strong—though I fully agree with

> To persevere
> He left it in thy power; ordain'd thy will,
> By nature free, not over-ruled by fate
> Inextricable, or strict necessity.
> Our voluntary service he requires,
> Not our necessitated; such with him
> Finds no acceptance, nor can find; for how
> Can hearts, not free, be tried whether they serve
> Willing or no, who will but what they must
> By destiny, and can no other choose?"

My father liked the gathering of the host "by imperial summons called," and the "mystical dance" which the mystical dance of the "starry sphere of planets resembles nearest." The angels' feast he called "delicious," and said "Old Milton the puritan must have been a bit of a sensualist in his nature."

Bk. v. 745. Of the coming of Satan with his host

> Innumerable as the stars of night,
> Or stars of morning, dewdrops, which the sun
> Impearls on every leaf and every flower—

and Satan mounting his royal seat, my father said, "What an imagination the old man had! Milton beats everyone in the material sublime."

Bk. v. 791. "Milton could not help adding his political comment

> If not equal all, yet free,
> Equally free; for orders and degrees
> Jar not with liberty, but well consist."

Bk. v. 896. My father quoted the famous lines about Abdiel as very fine—

> Among the faithless, faithful only he;
> Among innumerable false, unmoved,
> Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
> ..... From amidst them forth he passed
> Long way through hostile scorn.

Bk. vi. 372. "Milton's proper names are often chosen for their full sounds,

> Ariel and Arioch and the violence
> Of Ramiel."

Bk. VI. 771. "The following is what made Wordsworth admire Milton's imagination—

(*The Messiah*)

> He onward came; *far off his coming shone.*
> ..... Under his burning wheels
> The steadfast empyrean shook throughout
> All but the throne itself of God.

What a grand pause in the blank verse after 'God'!"

And "This is a rushing line that describes the lightning course of his wrath—

> Eternal wrath
> Burnt after them to the bottomless pit."

Bk. VII. 23–26. "A beautiful beginning—

> Standing on earth, not rapt above the pole,
> More safe I sing with mortal voice, unchanged
> To hoarse or mute, though fall'n on evil days,
> On evil days though fall'n, and evil tongues."

Bk. VII. 216. "This is a magnificent line,

> Silence, ye troubled waves, *and thou, deep, peace!*

How much finer than 'and, billows, peace,' the proper scansion, this break is, and the alliteration how subtle, 'and thou, dee*p*, *p*eace'!"

"Full of notable lines, e.g. 298:

> Wave rolling after wave, where way they found—
> If steep, with torrent rapture; if through plain,
> Soft-ebbing.....
> Then herbs of every leaf, that sudden flower'd,
> Opening their various colours, and made gay
> Her bosom, smelling sweet....."

Bk. VII. 431.

> The air
> Floats, as they pass, fann'd with unnumber'd plumes;
> From branch to branch the smaller birds with song
> Solaced the woods.

Then my father would quote the pictures of the nightingale, the swan and the peacock as beautiful.

"How much finer than Thomson's lines are those on the peacock! They are as fine as can be—

> The crested cock, whose clarion sounds
> The silent hours, and the other whose gay train
> Adorns him, coloured with the florid hue
> Of rainbows and starry eyes."

Bk. VIII. The first three lines of this book are "beautifully expressed—

> The angel ended, and in Adam's ear
> So charming left his voice, that he awhile
> Thought him still speaking, still stood fix'd to hear."

Bk. IX. 568. "Satan begins well too—

> Empress of this fair world, resplendent Eve."

"This seems to be rather poor however—

> The blasted stars looked wan, etc."

Bk. XI. 491. "I hate inversions, but this line (after the many mighty lines about the many ways that lead to death's 'grim cave') is strong in its inversion—

> And over them triumphant Death his dart
> Shook."

Bk. XI. 553. And my father often quoted

> "Nor love thy life, nor hate; but what thou livest
> Live well."

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(P. 84.) *The following is an abridgement of the account of Freshwater society, written by Miss Weld, and published in "Lord Tennyson," by H. J. Jennings:*

"I must ask you to transport yourself back ten summers, and to picture to your mind's eye the figure of Tennyson emerging from the little green postern leading to the Down Lane. Bearing to the left, he lingers awhile at the first gate, to admire the beautiful view which, with its sea of Mediterranean blue and its foreground of pines, he compares to the Riviera; but not again does he slacken the rapid pace, habitual to him, till he has turned towards Freshwater Bay, and reached a house embosomed in ivy and garlanded to the very roof with roses in full bloom. He looks up to the window from which smiling faces are

nodding to him, but ere his foot can cross the threshold the genial hostess of Dimbola has come out into her garden to meet and greet her honoured guest; and by the way in which they plunge forthwith into earnest converse, you can see what a true communion of spirit exists between them on most subjects, though, to her great regret, she cannot get Tennyson's full sympathy for the pursuit she at present finds so engrossing, and he cannot see why, because she has devoted herself to photography, he should be called upon to victimize himself by becoming her sitter so often. In vain does the lady of the camera lay before the poet the muster-roll of his illustrious fellow-victims who have already sat to her[1], and urge how successful his friends thought her last study of him, and that the state of the atmosphere is even more favourable to photography to-day than it was when that study was taken. Mrs Julia Margaret Cameron will not win her cause this time, her persuasions being suddenly cut short by the entrance of two gentlemen and a lady. The elder of the former at once arrests your attention by his patriarchal mien, as he stands erect, leaning on his staff, his ample white beard and snowy locks flowing down over a blue caftan, suggestive of the Eastern land so long his home. For this is Mr C. H. Cameron, the husband of our hostess and a member of the Indian Council, who was for many years resident in Calcutta, where he and his wife were most highly esteemed by Lord Hardinge (after whom they have called one of their sons, who is now in the Ceylon Civil Service). Mr Cameron is a first-rate classic, and he and the Laureate engage in an animated discussion about the respective merits of certain great Greek and Latin writers, and the peculiarities of their several styles, whilst Mrs Cameron turns to inquire of the younger gentleman how it fares with the poor of Freshwater. None can better answer her question, for he to whom it is addressed is Horatio Tennyson, seventh brother of the poet, now resident at the Terrace, close to Mrs Cameron, who is devoting his life to ministering amongst those 'who are any ways afflicted or distressed in mind, body, or estate,' winning the wanderers back into the fold by showing them he still counts them his brethren in Christ.

After the bodily presence of Mrs Cameron was taken from us, her spirit seemed to linger on in the person of a sister, who had come to Freshwater in order to be near her. This was Mrs Prinsep, the wife of Mr Thoby Prinsep, the well-known East India Director. To their

[1] A muster-roll not then complete, but afterwards embracing, among many other names, those of Browning, Carlyle, Darwin, Herschel, Herr Joachim, Jowett, Lecky, Sir Henry Taylor, Aubrey de Vere, Watts, the Emperor Frederick of Germany, etc. When the last-named was sitting to her, she was so taken up with the desire of getting a satisfactory likeness, that, to make him open his eyes wider, she shouted out to him, "Big eyes! big eyes!" quite oblivious, at the moment, of his rank.

house, 'The Briary,' the Laureate (together with his eldest son, who, after leaving college, became his father's inseparable companion) was an almost daily visitor, and many were the hours spent by him in congenial conversation, on politics, literature, or science, with the master-mind that had long had so potent a share in the government of India, and whose ready grasp of almost every imaginable subject was only less wonderful than his marvellous memory. His keen interest in contemporary politics was unimpaired by the fact that his loss of eyesight compelled him to depend on others for his knowledge of passing events. Tennyson took delight in reading aloud to him the interesting letters which every mail brought him from his artist-son, Mr Val Prinsep, whilst the latter was engaged on his large painting of the 'Proclamation of the Queen as Empress of India' (which letters have since been published, almost without alteration, under the title of 'Imperial India').

With the Prinseps lived, for part of the year, the artist from whom their son Val had first learnt to handle the brush—Mr Watts, the Royal Academician; and many a pleasant talk about art have the poet and the painter had together in the large studio at the Briary, on whose walls the colossal study of the 'Drayman and his Horses' used to hang. Many more of his pictures adorned the living-rooms, which were artistically furnished with costly objects from the East—so arranged that comfort was never sacrificed to appearance, but everything was made to minister to that hospitality of which the host and the hostess were the very soul. Amongst those who were the most frequently to be met here were Mrs Hughes and her children and grandchildren. Mrs Nassau Senior, so well known for her philanthropic labours, long shared her mother's Freshwater home; but after her death, this noble-hearted mother undertook the long voyage to Tennessee, in order to take her granddaughter out to her father, who was in charge of the colony of Rugby, founded by his brother, Mr Tom Hughes. Greatly to the regret of Tennyson and of all her Freshwater friends, she has never returned to the Isle of Wight, but continues to reside in the colony, respected and beloved by all as their common mother.

Tennyson has an intense dislike to dining out; his habit being to retire soon after dinner to his study, and there to spend the evening in solitude with his books, unless he is tempted by the bright starlight to climb up to the flat roof of his house, to carry on his favourite pursuit of astronomy. I well remember one particular night on which there was a total eclipse of the moon, when he was so much struck by the number of constellations rendered visible to the naked eye through the veiling of the moon's light, that he insisted on his youngest son (Lionel) being got out of bed to look at the sight."

## (P. 212.) *The Franklin Epitaph in Greek and Latin.*

My father wrote to my brother and myself, enclosing a letter from Mr Gladstone:

*Nov.* 19*th*, 1875.

MY DEAR BOYS,

Gladstone and others have been amusing themselves translating into Greek and Latin my "Epitaph on Franklin." He wants to make a little book of it in various languages like that of the *Lady of the Tree*, which you may remember Montagu Butler gave me. Lord Lyttelton's is, I think, the best translation (of those he has sent):

οἴχεται· ἐν Βορέου νιφοέσσαις ὀστέα κεῖται
ἀκταῖς· ναυτιλίαν Σὺ δὲ ναυτίλλει μέγ' ἀμείνω,
Ἥρωος ψυχή, πόλον ἄμβροτον εἰσοιχνοῦσαν.

Would Macaulay, Butcher or any among you like to try your hand on it?

A. T.

I have added the original lest you should have forgotten it.

Not here! the white North has thy bones; and thou,
Heroic sailor-soul,
Art passing on thine happier voyage now
Toward no earthly pole.

## *From the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone (about translations of my father's epitaph on Sir John Franklin).*

HAWARDEN CASTLE, CHESTER,
*Nov.* 16*th*, 1875.

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

Can you by chance, and will you by kindness, give me the name and whereabout of a gentleman who is now preparing a work on Sir John Franklin? I have unhappily mislaid his letter.

The letter touched you and you may have been made aware of its purpose. It invited me to translate, and to invite others to translate, your fine epitaph, which is also in the old Greek sense epigram. I was frightened, but thought I would ask of others what I dared not try. So

I accumulated a little store, which I send[1]. They may shock, or may amuse you. *Generally* they are by men of good or more than good name in scholarship. I have however (after all my coy fears) tried my hand. It is right that I should say that the two last, notwithstanding their remarkable verbal coincidences, are distinct in authorship and date. Do not look at the list of names till you have performed the part of the Queen of Beauty, or of Rhadamanthus. Query, is it murder or only manslaughter?

With all kindest regards and remembrances,

Ever sincerely yours,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

Do you and Mrs T. never come so near the "White North" as this? The place is worth a look.

No. 1.

Non hic, Nauta, jaces fortissime. Contigit ossa
Semper Hyperboreo candida terra gelu.
Inde anima vehitur, cursu lætata secundo,
Ardua, terrestrem non aditura polum.

MR RICKARDS, Q.C.

No. 2.

οἶχεται· ἐν Βορέου νιφοέσσαις ὀστέα κεῖται
ἀκταῖς· ναυτιλίαν Σὺ δὲ ναυτίλλει μέγ' ἀμείνω,
Ἥρωος ψυχή, πόλον ἄμβροτον εἰσοιχνοῦσαν.

LORD LYTTELTON.

No. 3.

Siste pedem: procul hinc albescunt ossa, sed Ille
Navita fortis agit cursum trans sidera, longi
Quò tandem detur metam tetigisse laboris.

BISHOP OF ROCHESTER.

[1] The following were two of the best translations, the first by Edmund Lushington, the second by Canon David Melvill:

χαῖρ' ἀγαθὴ ψυχή· κρυεραῖς σέθεν ὀστέα βήσαις
κεῖται ἐν ἀρκτῴαις, οὐδέ σε πατρὶς ἔχει,
ἤδη δ' ἐξανύεις σὺ μακάρτερα τέρμαθ' ὁδοῖο,
οὐ χθονὸς ἀλλ' ἄστρων ἐς πόλον ἀννέφελον.

---

σῶμα μὲν Ἀρκτῴαι νιφάδες λάχον· οὐρανίην δὲ
ἠμίθεος ψυχὴ στέλλεται εὐπλοΐην.

No. 4.

Non hic, sed Arcto membra sub albidâ;
Nauta ipse, et Heros lucida sidera
Polumque cælestem requirit,
Navigio potiore vectus.

W. E. G. (*Nov.* 12).

No. 5.

Non hic, sed niveâ requiescunt ossa sub Arcto;
Tuque, anima Herois pia Nautæ,
Trajicis, usque Polum cui non terrestris origo,
Navigio felicius, æquor.

LORD SELBORNE.

No. 6.

Non hic, sed niveâ jacent
Arcti relliquiæ plagâ.
Auris Ipse faventibus
Heros Navitaque impiger
Usque ad cæruleum bono
Pergit navigio Polum.

W. E. G. (*Nov.* 16).

My father writes to Gladstone:

I liked the Greek version best; but then it is easier to translate into Greek than Latin, Greek being so much more flexible. No. 1 "terrestrem non aditura polum" hardly gives "toward no earthly pole," and in No. 5 "cui non terrestris origo" seems bald and feeble. No. 4 "lucida sidera" is *de trop*. Altogether after the Greek I like No. 6. He seems to be continuing his voyage from the end of the earth's axis, the earthly pole to the heavenly one, only "auris Ipse faventibus" should be with more favourable winds, happier; and I doubt about "cæruleum." Might not our pole be called "cerulean"? "Cælestem" (as in No. 4) would seem to be the word wanted. My neighbour, Mr Prinsep, of the Indian Council, 83 years old, and as full of enthusiasm as a boy, but so blind he cannot write or read, spouted out to me yesterday morning a Persian translation of my epitaph.

*Summer tours that my father made with me*, 1874 *to* 1892.

1874. Stratford on Avon.

1875. Pau and the Pyrenees.

1876. Battle Abbey, Fitzgerald's at Woodbridge, and Hawarden.

1877. Canterbury with a view to "Becket" (Canon Robertson showed us everything connected with Becket, and we went carefully over the scene of the murder).

1878. Ireland, Westport (Lord Sligo's), Galway, Mount Trenchard (Lord Monteagle's), and the Shannon, Killarney, Dublin and Wicklow.

1879. Salisbury, Stonehenge and Amesbury.

1880. Dolomites, Venice, Verona and Lago di Garda.

1881. Sherwood, with a view to "Robin Hood" and "The Foresters."

1882. Dovedale.

1883. Voyage in the *Pembroke Castle* to the Orkneys, Norway, and Copenhagen.

1884. Rowfant (the Locker-Lampsons').

1885. Gavelacre. Mr Stewart Hodgson's farm on the Test.

1886. Cromer and Cambridge.

1887. In the *Stella* to St David's, Clovelly, Tintagil and Channel Isles.

1888. Chichester and Kingly Vale.

1889. In the *Sunbeam* to Cornwall and Devon.

1890. Holmbury and Monkshatch near Guildford.

1891. In the *Assegai* to Exmouth and Dulverton.

1892. In the *Assegai* to Guernsey, Sark, and Jersey.

## GERMAN TRANSLATIONS.

My father's works have been translated into various languages in many parts of the world. The German translations are the most numerous. A list is appended, sent me by Baron von Tauchnitz:

| Title | Translator | Date of publication | Publisher |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gedichte. | W. Hertzberg | 1853, 1868 | Gebrüder Katz in Dessau |
| In Memoriam | | 1854 | Vieweg und Sohn in Braunschweig |
| Ausgewählte Gedichte | H. Fischer | 1853 | Th. Enslin in Berlin |
| Aylmer's Feld | H. A. Feldmann | 1870 | H. Gruning, Hamburg |
| " " | F. W. Weber | 1869 | F. Naumann, Leipzig |
| Ausgewählte Dichtungen | H. A. Feldmann | 1870 | H. Gruning, Hamburg |
| Enoch Arden | R. Schellwien | 1867 | H. C. Huch, Quedlinburg |
| " " | R. Waldmüller | 1869, 1875, 1880, 1883 | H. Gruning, Hamburg |
| " " | F. W. Weber | 1869, 1878 | F. Naumann, Leipzig |
| Enoch Arden, Godiva | H. A. Feldmann | 1870, 1872, 1880 | H. Gruning, Hamburg |
| Freundes Klage | R. Waldmüller, Duboc | 1870, 1871, 1879 | " " |
| Königs-Idyllen | W. Schotz | 1867 | Georg Reimer, Berlin |
| Ausgewählte Dichtungen | A. Strodtmann | 1868 | Bibliographisches Institut, Leipzig |
| " " | M. Rugard | 1872 | Newmann Hartmann, Ebbing |
| Königs-Idyllen | H. A. Feldmann | 1872 | H. Gruning, Hamburg |
| Zum Gedächtniss | A. von Bohlen | 1874 | Gebrüder Bornträger, Berlin |
| Enoch Arden | C. Hessel | 1873 | Th. Reclam jun., Leipzig |
| " " illustrirt | A. Strodtmann | 1876, 1881, 1891 | G. Grote, Berlin |
| Harold | Graf Wickenburg | 1880 | H. Gruning, Hamburg |

| Title | Translator | Date of publication | Publisher |
|---|---|---|---|
| Enoch Arden | C. Eichholz | 1881 | T. F. Richter, Hamburg |
| " " | | 1887 | Verlags Anstalt, Hamburg |
| " " illustrirt | R. Waldmüller, Duboc | 1885 | H. Gruning, Hamburg |
| " " Volks-Ausgabe | " " | 1883, 1891, 1892, 1893 | " " |
| Königs-Idyllen | C. Weiser | 1884 | Th. Reclam jun., Leipzig |
| Enoch Arden | H. Griebenow | 1889 | Otto Hendel, Halle |
| Bilder und Gestalten, illustrirt | Paget und Dickses | 1890 | Th. Strofer, München |
| Ausgewählte Dichtungen | A. Strodtmann | 1887 | Bibliographisches Institut, Leipzig |
| Locksley Hall | R. B. Esmarch | 1888 | F. A. Perthes, Gotha |
| " " | F. Freiligrath | 1888 | H. Gruning, Hamburg |
| " " | T. Feis | 1888 | " " |
| Maud. Ein Gedicht | F. W. Weber | 1891 | F. Schoningh, Paderborn |
| Enoch Arden und Andere Dichtungen | A. Strodtmann | 1892 | W. Fiedler, Leipzig |
| " " " " " | M. Mendheim | 1893 | " " |
| Aylmer's Feld | H. Griebenow | 1893 | H. Gesenius, Halle |
| Balladen und Lyrische Gedichte | von Harbon | 1894 | O. Brandner, Charlottenburg |
| Aylmer's Feld | E. V. Zenker | 1893 | Otto Hendel, Halle |

F. Freiligrath translated some of the shorter poems.

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[2] R. Browning.
[3] A. H. Hallam.
[4] Hartley Coleridge.

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[1] E. Fitzgerald.
[2] R. Browning.
[3] Frederick Tennyson.
[4] A. H. Hallam.

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